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Aruba TODAY

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TAKING A SHOT AT DIPLOMACY

JOHN HEILPRIN
ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Within 24 hours of an interim deal aimed at reining in Iran's nuclear program, world powers raised hopes Monday for the first face-to-face talks to end the Syrian civil war as the United Nations called the warring parties to the table.



UN Joint Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi smiles after the UN announced the Conference Geneva 2 at the United Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, November 25, 2013.

(AP Photo/Salvatore DiNolfi)

But huge gaps remain. The opposition remains vague on whether it will even attend the Geneva conference called for Jan. 22, and both sides hold fundamentally different visions on the very basics, particularly the future role of President Bashar Assad. Nevertheless, Monday's announcement of a date for the talks after months of delay produced hope.

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TRAVEL TRAUMA

Troy Peoples, center, and Amenia Evernz, right, pass the time watching TV after their flight to Washington state was delayed by two hours due to winter weather at Dallas-Fort Worth International airport, Monday, Nov. 25, 2013. Winter weather has caused travel disruptions throughout the area including the cancelation and delays of hundreds of flights.

(AP Photo/Brandon Wade)

Travelers cast wary eye as storm moves eastward

SCOTT MAYEROWITZ
DAVID WARREN
Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A winter storm system blamed for at least 10 fatal accidents in the West and Texas threatens to dampen the Thanksgiving holiday for millions of Americans traveling this week. Nearly 300 American Airlines and American Eagle flights were canceled in and out of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport

on Monday due to the weather, spokeswoman Laura Masvidal said, mirroring disruptions at the air hub a day earlier. Some of the country's busiest airports — New York, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Boston and Charlotte, N.C. — could see big delays. Icy roads led to hundreds of accidents and at least 10 deaths, half of them in Texas. On Monday, the storm brought a mix of snow, sleet and freezing rain to parts of

Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, southern Kansas and Texas. But as the storm continues east, there are fears of heavy rain along the busy Interstate 95 corridor and sleet, freezing rain and snow away from the coast and at higher elevations. Tom Kines, a meteorologist with AccuWeather, said it will be "primarily a rain event" for the East Coast, with up to three inches of rain dousing travelers. "The further inland you get

— especially as you get into that higher terrain — you are going to deal with frozen precipitation," Kines said. Snow could fall in western Pennsylvania and the interior of New England. Up to 9 inches could blanket northern parts of West Virginia, where the National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning from Tuesday morning through Wednesday afternoon.

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Syria talks aim to build on Iran momentum

Continued from front

Parties are hopeful that the precedent of successful nuclear negotiations with Iran might open new diplomatic channels that could help broker an end to the nearly 3-year-old civil war in Syria that has killed more than 100,000 people. The nuclear deal between

military advisers, trained pro-government militia-men and directed one of its proxies, Lebanon's Shiite Muslim Hezbollah, to fight alongside Assad's troops. U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky played down the possibility that the negotiations with Iran played a direct role in the movement on Syria, which followed

ian opposition coalition expressed hope the nuclear deal would transform Iran into a "positive regional player," relinquishing its support for Assad.

"We hope the Iranian nuclear deal will provide impetus for a Syria deal," Abdelbaset Sieda of the Syrian National Coalition told The Associated Press. "The

age Assad to make concessions, at least enough to keep talks going.

"If the Iran talks had not worked or if the Iranian deal had not come about yesterday, I think it might have been more hard-going today," said Salman Shaikh, director of the Brookings Doha Center. "In terms of the diplomatic atmosphere, there's certainly a feeling of some impetus." The conference aims to work out a roadmap for Syria adopted by the U.S., Russia and other major powers in June 2012 — including creating a transitional government leading to the holding of elections. Enormous challenges lie ahead. Even participation by both sides is by no means guaranteed.

Under pressure from the U.S., the Syrian National Coalition has dropped conditions that Assad step down before any talks and has eased demands for guarantees ahead of time that he will not be part of any transitional government — demands that the Syrian government has roundly rejected.

But the coalition is sticking to its condition that Assad release detainees and allow humanitarian corridors to provide access for desperately needed aid to rebel-held areas.

"These are trust-building measures that need to take place ahead of any talks, otherwise all efforts to convene a peace conference are futile," Sieda said. □

Afghan leader, Rice at odds over US security deal

PATRICK QUINN
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan's president and the U.S. delivered blunt messages to each other Monday that gave no indication of a resolution of their disagreements over a pact that governs the future of the American troop presence in the country.

Hamid Karzai said he won't back down from his refusal to sign during the rest of his term in office, with National Security Adviser Susan Rice responding that this would mean the U.S. would then pull out all its forces after 2014. Their meeting in Kabul came the day after Karzai's surprise decision to ignore Sunday's recommendation by an Afghan assembly of dignitaries to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement, a refusal that cast doubt on whether American and allied troops would remain in Afghanistan to train Afghan forces after most foreign troops withdraw next year.

According to Karzai's office, he told Rice during Monday's meeting that he wouldn't back down from that decision, deferring it to whoever succeeds him as president in April elections.

The White House said Rice responded by telling Karzai that the United States will plan to pull all troops out of his country after 2014 if he doesn't promptly sign.

It added that Rice told Karzai that a signed agreement is necessary to plan for thousands of troops to stay in the country to train and mentor Afghan security forces to face the Taliban.

"President Karzai outlined new conditions for signing the agreement and indicated he is not prepared to sign the BSA promptly," the White House said. "Without a prompt signature, the U.S. would have no choice but to initiate planning for a post-2014 future in which there would be no U.S. or NATO troop presence in Afghanistan," she told the Afghan president. □



A Shiite fighter clashes with members of the Sunni-dominated Free Syrian Army rebel in the town of Hatita, in the countryside of Damascus, Syria. Syria's government and opposition will hold their first peace talks on Jan. 22 in Geneva, in an attempt to halt the nearly 3-year-old civil war that has killed more than 100,000 people, the United Nations announces.

(AP Photo/Jaber al-Helo)

Tehran and world powers was announced in Geneva on Sunday. Success in negotiations on a final accord could pave the way for normalization of ties between Iran and the West, reshaping the Mideast political map.

As Assad's staunchest ally, Iran has given him significant financial support and is believed to have sent

a meeting in Geneva of senior diplomats from the U.S., Russia and the U.N.

The two tracks "are very separate, both tracks have been going on in different formats, in different locations," he told reporters. "So I would simply say that it was a good weekend for diplomacy."

Still, a senior member in the main, Western-backed Syr-

Iranian government must cut relations with the regime and leave the choice to the Syrian people."

A break between Iran and Assad is unlikely in the short term given the foothold the alliance gives Tehran in the Arab world. Still, a thaw between Iran and the U.S. — which backs the opposition coalition — could prompt Tehran to encour-

UN urges effort to wipe out LRA and get Kony

EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council urged new efforts Monday to end attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, release all people abducted by the brutal African rebel group and send its notorious leader Joseph Kony to the International Criminal Court for prosecution for crimes against humanity.

A presidential statement approved by all 15 council

members welcomes a recent program toward ending war crimes in central Africa by the rebel group and pledges "to maintain the current momentum until a permanent end to the threat posed by the LRA has been achieved."

But the council expressed serious concern that the continued instability and security vacuum in the Central African Republic are hampering counter-LRA operations and contribut-

ing to the reinforcement of the LRA in the country, which has descended into a state of near-anarchy.

The LRA, which originated in Uganda in the 1980s as a popular tribal uprising against the government, has waged one of Africa's longest and most brutal rebellions. Its fighters are accused by the U.N. and human rights groups of cutting off the tongues and lips of innocent civilians and kidnapping thousands

of children and forcing them to be soldiers and sex slaves.

Military pressure forced the LRA out of Uganda in 2005, and the rebels scattered across parts of central Africa. The LRA insurgency and the Ugandan government's response have left at least 100,000 people dead. The Security Council said in 2011 that more than 440,000 people across the region had been displaced. □

Obama pushes back against critics of Iran deal

JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pushing back hard, President Barack Obama forcefully defended the temporary agreement to freeze Iran's disputed nuclear program on Monday, declaring that the United States "cannot close the door on diplomacy."

The president's remarks followed skepticism of the historic accord expressed by some U.S. allies abroad as well as by members of Congress at home, including fellow Democrats. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the fiercest opponents of the six-month deal, called it a "historic mistake" and announced he would be dispatching a top envoy to Washington to try to toughen the final agreement negotiators will soon begin hammering out.

Obama, without naming names, swiped at those who have questioned the wisdom of engaging with Iran.

"Tough talk and bluster may be the easy thing to do politically, but it's not the right thing to do for our security," he said during an event in San Francisco.

The weekend agreement between Iran and six world powers — the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany — is to temporarily halt parts of Tehran's disputed nuclear program and allow for more intrusive international monitoring of Iran's facilities. In exchange, Iran gains some modest relief from stiff economic sanctions and a pledge from Obama that no new penalties will be levied during the six months. The groundwork for the accord was laid during four clandestine meetings between U.S. and Iranian officials throughout the summer and fall. An earlier meeting took place in March, before Iranians elected President Hassan Rouhani, a cleric who has taken more moderate public stances than his predecessor. Details of the secret talks were confirmed to The Associated Press by

three senior administration officials. The U.S. and its allies contend Iran is seeking to produce a nuclear bomb — of particular concern to Israel, which fears an attack — while Tehran insists it is merely pursuing a peaceful nuclear program for energy and medical purposes.

Even with the criticism, for Obama the sudden shift to foreign policy presents an opportunity to steady his flailing second term and take some attention off the domestic troubles that have plagued the White House in recent weeks, especially the rollout of his signature health care law. Perhaps with his presidential standing — and the strength of the rest of his term — in mind, he made sure on Monday to draw a connection between the nuclear pact and his long-declared willingness to ne-

gotiate directly with Iran. "When I first ran for president, I said it was time for a new era of American lead-

ership in the world, one that turned the page on a decade of war and began a new era of engagement

with the world," he said. "As president and as commander in chief, I've done what I've said." □



President Barack Obama turns around to respond to hecklers interrupting his speech, Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, at the Betty Ann Ong Chinese Recreation Center in San Francisco.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

One Year Later:

Motive still a mystery in Newtown attack

188 South east bedroom (shooter's room)



This image contained in the "Appendix to Report on the Shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School and 36 Yogananda St., Newtown, Connecticut On December 14, 2012" and released Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, by the Danbury, Conn., State's Attorney shows a scene at 36 Yogananda St., where gunman Adam Lanza lived with his mother in Newtown, Conn. Lanza opened fire inside the school killing 20 first-graders and six educators before killing himself as police arrived.

(AP Photo)

MICHAEL MELIA

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Connecticut

(AP) — Why a young gunman went on a murderous shooting rampage at a U.S. school a year ago is still a mystery and may never be known with certainty, prosecutors said Monday in a report that ended their investigation.

Adam Lanza, 20, was ob-

essed with mass murders and the 1999 Columbine High School shooting in particular, but investigators did not find evidence he ever told others of his intentions to carry out such an attack, according to the summary report by the lead investigator, State's Attorney Stephen Sedensky III.

Lanza killed 20 young chil-

dren and six educators with a semi-automatic rifle inside the Connecticut school on Dec. 14. He shot and killed his mother inside their home before driving to the school, and killed himself with a handgun as police arrived.

The shooting moved gun safety to the top of the agenda for President Barack Obama — though his gun control efforts have failed in Congress — and led states across the country to re-evaluate laws on issues including school safety.

The new report describes a gunman who had "significant mental health issues" but had knowledge of what he was planning: He had materials on mass murder, he smashed his computer hard drive, and he used earplugs during the shooting.

"The obvious question that remains is: 'Why did the shooter murder twenty-seven people, including twenty children?' Unfortunately, that question may never be answered conclusively," the report said. Lanza "was undoubt-

edly afflicted with mental health problems; yet despite a fascination with mass shootings and firearms, he displayed no aggressive or threatening tendencies," Sedensky wrote. Lanza's mother, Nancy Lanza, was concerned for her son and said he hadn't gone anywhere in three months and would communicate with her by e-mail only, even though they were living in the same house. She never expressed fear that she or anyone was in danger from her son, the report said. Sedensky said there was no clear indication why Lanza chose the school as the target other than the fact that it was close to his home.

The report said Lanza in 2005 was diagnosed with Asperger's disorder — but "what contribution this made to the shootings, if any, is unknown."

Asperger's is an autism-like disorder that is not associated with violence. Lanza might have hinted at his intentions online in the days before the massacre, the report indicated. □



Cars travel a highway near the Sandia Mountains in Placitas, N.M. Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, after a snowstorm struck most of the state. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)

Travelers cast wary eye as storm moves eastward

Continued from front

Jeff Smidt is traveling Wednesday from his home in Toronto to visit his family in Andover, Mass., just outside Boston.

"My understanding is that I'm traveling at like the worst time ever," he said. Smidt tried to get on an earlier flight but JetBlue told him it isn't waiving any change fees yet.

"I'm just hoping I also don't become a statistic during the holiday weekend," he said. "Worst comes to worst, it will be an eight-hour trek down Interstate 90."

Ninety percent of travelers this week will drive, according to AAA, and an estimated 38.9 million people — 1.6 percent fewer than last year — are expected to drive 50 miles or more from their home.

Gas is about 15 cents cheaper than last year, AAA said Monday, with a gallon of regular selling for \$3.28.

The car-lobbying group and travel agency says Wednesday will be the busiest travel day, a forecast based on a formula that factors in consumer confidence, stock market performance, unemployment and a survey of 418 people that has a 6 percent margin of error.

Air travel will be busier and more expensive than usual this Thanksgiving.

This holiday will likely see the most air travelers since 2007, according to Airlines for America, the industry's

trade and lobbying group, with the busiest day being Sunday, an estimated 2.56 million passengers. Wednesday is expected to be the second-busiest with 2.42 million passengers.

The average domestic airfare is up 9.5 percent from last Thanksgiving to \$313, according to the Airlines Reporting Corp., which processes tickets sold online and by traditional travel agencies.

Meanwhile, Amtrak prices in September — the most recent month for which data is available — were up more than 4 percent from last year.

Adding to the usual stress of holiday travel, though, is the weather that's ahead for much of the country. Already, the storm system dropped several inches of snow last week in New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and West Texas.

Some of the worst weather was expected in the Ouachita Mountains of western Arkansas but most of the region saw only sporadic ice and very cold temperatures.

"You can see it on the power lines but the roads are fine," said Courtney O'Neal-Walden, who planned to close her Dairyette restaurant in Mount Ida four hours early because business was slow.

In Texas, up to 44,000 people, mostly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, were without power earlier in the day, but that number had dropped considerably by the afternoon. □



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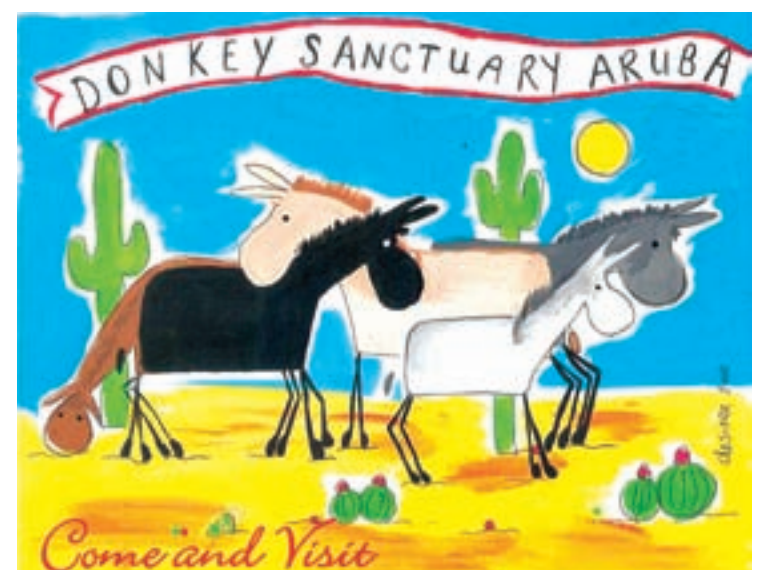
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Midwest 'petcoke' mountains raising residents' ire

TAMMY WEBBER
Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The images are startling. Billowing black clouds darken the daytime sky as wind-driven grit pelts homes and cars and forces bewildered residents to take cover.

The onslaught, captured in photos and video footage from Detroit and Chicago this year, was caused by the same thing: brisk winds sweeping across huge black piles of petroleum coke, or "petcoke," a powdery byproduct of oil refining that's been accumulating along U.S. Midwest shipping channels and sparking a new wave of health and environmental concerns.

The piles are evidence of a sharp increase in North American oil production — particularly crude extracted from oil sands in Canada — that has been trapped in the Midwest because of limited pipeline capacity to carry it to the Gulf and West coasts, leading to unprecedented amounts of oil refining and petcoke production here. In Midwestern neighborhoods near refineries, the growing black mountains have brought outcries from residents and new efforts by lawmakers to control or banish the blowing dust.

"We could barely open the windows this summer because the black dust was so bad," said Susanna Gomez, 37, a mother and grandmother who lives on Chicago's far southeast side, across a set of railroad tracks from a shipping terminal that stockpiles petcoke until it can be loaded on to ships for export. She said she worries about one of her sons, who's asthmatic, but doesn't have the money to move.

Alan Beemsterboer, whose

family owns another nearby site that long has handled slag, asphalt and coal, and now, increasingly, petcoke, said he doesn't understand the controversy.

"This has been an industrial area forever — a coke plant used to be there, a steel mill used to be there," Beemsterboer said. "Coal and petcoke are just dirty words now."

Petcoke has been part of the American industrial landscape since the 1930s, when refineries began installing equipment to "cook" residue left over from making gasoline and diesel into a solid fuel that could be burned in power plants and cement kilns.

But the sheer volume of petcoke that appeared suddenly in Detroit and Chicago this year — almost all of it in open-air piles — was unprecedented, and caught residents and public officials off guard.

"With the amount of Canadian oil entering the U.S. increasing almost daily, refineries like Marathon in Detroit, BP in Whiting, Indiana, and Phillips 66 in Roxana, Illinois, have expanded to handle the glut. Even more

oil could be on the way if the controversial Keystone XL pipeline is approved, though by then additional domestic pipelines could direct some to refineries in other regions, experts say. Refineries usually sell the petcoke to other companies, which store it until it can be loaded onto Great

Lakes ships for export to places like China. Burning it emits high levels of soot and greenhouse gases, so its use in the U.S. is limited. In Detroit, petcoke began appearing along the Detroit River in the spring, several months after the Marathon Oil refinery completed a \$2.2 billion expansion.

But an outcry by residents, who shot video footage of the blowing grit, prompted city officials to order the removal of the piles. In Chicago, residents became alarmed when the black piles began growing about six months ago, said Tom Shepherd, a member of a neighborhood group. □



In this October 2013 photo, petroleum coke, or petcoke, is stored on barges on the Calumet River near the Chicago Skyway Bridge in Chicago. The grainy black byproduct of oil refining has been piling up along Midwest shipping channels and sparking a new wave of environmental concerns. The volume and size of petcoke piles has grown sharply — especially in the Midwest.

(AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

School superintendent charged in rape case

STEUBENVILLE, Ohio (AP) — An Ohio school superintendent, two coaches and a principal have been charged by a grand jury that investigated whether other laws were broken in the rape of a drunken 16-year-old girl by two football players, the state's attorney general said Monday.

The Steubenville case drew national attention after hacker activists pushed media coverage and alleged a cover-up. The two

teenage football players were convicted of raping the girl after an alcohol-fueled party in August 2012. The crime shocked many because other students recorded the attack on their cellphones and gossiped about it online.

The case came to light via morning-after text messages, social media posts and online photos and video. The case has long been marked by allegations that more football players should have been charged

and that police and prosecutors tried to cover up aspects of the case early on. The grand jury investigated whether adults like coaches or school administrators knew of the rape allegation but failed to report it as required by state law. "How do you hold kids accountable if you don't hold the adults accountable?" Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said. The charges against the superintendent, Mike McVey, include felony counts of

obstructing justice, DeWine said. McVey wasn't immediately available for comment.

An school principal, Lynnett Gorman, 40, and a strength coach, Seth Fluharty, 26, are charged with failing to report possible child abuse. A former volunteer coach, Matthew Bellardine, 26, faces several misdemeanor charges, including making false statements and contributing to underage alcohol consumption. □

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Ski season off to strong start in Utah

PAUL FOY

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) —

Utah's ski industry is getting an early-season intravenous shot. Ski-pass sales and lodging reservations are up as resorts reap the benefit of an improving economy. Even the weather is cooperating, with November building up snow equity on the slopes.

Utah boosters hope the Sochi Olympics whip up enthusiasm for skiing in the state that held the 2002 Winter Games.

Many of the 14 Utah resorts

faster than the year before, industry officials say.

The early bookings come as Park City Mountain Resorts prepares to celebrate its storied 50-year history with a season-long series of live music, fireworks and giveaways. "The early-season snowfall helped calm fears," said Nathan Rafferty, president of the trade group Ski Utah. After a pair of lackluster winters, Utah was itching for a comeback and appears to be getting it, he said.

"We haven't seen this kind of sustained strength in the

ern Utah poured \$3.5 million into base lodges and magic-carpet surface lifts. Other Utah resorts invested in snow-making, grooming fleets and dining options.

Another convenience is unfolding off the slopes. Salt Lake City's airport is now served by light-rail transit, which can connect vacationing skiers — with bus transfers — to Alta and Snowbird or Brighton and Solitude in the canyons east of Salt Lake City. Eventually, Utah wants to run light-rail directly to the four resorts. Mass transit is shap-

popular multi-resort pass to Utah.

For around \$700 — a bargain by industry standards — Vail's EPIC pass gives skiers the run of six Colorado resorts, one in Utah, and three around Lake Tahoe, plus some free skiing at select European resorts.

Vail sold around 350,000 EPIC passes before sales closed Sunday (Nov. 24), up from 300,000 last winter, executives say. With buyers in all 50 states and 80 countries snapping it up, Utah expects to grab more out-of-state skiers because

Effect of weed on ski biz hazy

KRISTEN

WYATT

THOMAS PEIPERT

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Colorado's ski resorts are taking the offensive in ensuring the multi-billion-dollar-a-year industry isn't hurt by recreational marijuana stores that are set to open at about the same time many families begin planning their winter vacations.

For some skiers and snowboarders, hitting the slopes with a joint or pipe tucked into a winter coat has long been commonplace. But with the stores set to open Jan. 1 near resorts across the state — and a handful of companies offering cannabis-themed ski trips — the future is a bit hazy. Will a pot tourism industry flourish or will families decide to go to resorts in states where marijuana is outlawed?

For an industry already worrying about global warming, avalanches or simply a bad snow season, the stakes are high. Jennifer Rudolph of Colorado Ski Country USA, a trade association that represents 21 resorts in the state, says the ski industry generates about \$3 billion in tourism revenue annually and Colorado had more than 11 million skier visits last year, more than any other state.

"We are being proactive in educating the public in what to expect when they come to Colorado to ski," she said. She added: "We're getting the word out that we have a lot of things to offer guests, but smoking marijuana is not one of them. ... We have so much to offer our guests that outweigh the legality of possession of marijuana."

Rudolph says her organization is informing visitors through social media and its blog about the new pot laws, which were passed last year and legalize marijuana possession in small amounts for adults over 21, including out-of-state visitors. □



This November 2013, photo, shows a skier at Park City Mountain Resort, in Park City, Utah. About half of Utah's 14 resorts are up and running on snow that piled up during November. Officials say season-pass sales are strong. Park City has booked 28 percent of the season for lodging already.

(AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

are stepping up offerings for season-pass holders, daily visitors and young learners. They're holding prices, offering special deals and notably, more multi-resort privileges. For vacationers who can't plan early-season purchases, Utah's Eagle Point ski area will offer \$25 lift tickets to anyone on Thursdays and Sundays when it opens Dec. 19.

It's shaping up as a season of hope for Utah skiing after a pair of unimpressive snow years. By mid-November, Park City had booked 28 percent of the season for lodging at a pace a fifth

mountain lodging industry since pre-2008," said Ralf Garrison, director of Denver-based analysts DestiMetrics.

Resorts around Salt Lake City have modernized rapidly since the 2002 Olympics, and skiers can expect more improvements on the slope this winter. Fast lifts can now be found at most of the resorts, and Brighton Resort is opening a girls-only snowboard terrain park. Snowbird replaced its poky two-seat Gad 2 with a high-speed quad, cutting ride time in half on a popular side of the mountain. Brian Head in south-

ing up as an alternative to renting a car.

Anything that keeps Utah skiing low-profile is good, said Burke and his ski buddy, Torg Hickman, a 46-year-old nursing assistant. Both plan to take February off for skiing, burning a year's vacation time.

"This is the best place in the world," crowed Hickman, who has been skiing in Utah for 37 years.

Utah skiers can largely thank a Colorado company for putting downward pressure on ticket and pass rates. Vail Resorts Inc. took over Canyons Resort at Park City and brought a

of it.

"The big story is Vail brought the EPIC pass to town. And we're seeing other resorts join forces," Rafferty said. "That's good for Utah skiers."

Brighton and Solitude offered early-season buyers a joint Big Cottonwood Canyon pass for the first time this winter, and they made a connecting trail between resorts easier to navigate. In addition, Alta and Snowbird teamed up on a pass option with some neighbors over the Wasatch Ridge, Park City Mountain Resort and Deer Valley. □

US Financial Front:

Contracts to buy American homes fall for 5th month



In this November 2013 photo, a home is advertised for sale in Matthews, N.C. The National Association of Realtors reported negative data on the number of Americans who signed contracts to buy homes in October on Monday, Nov. 25, 2013.

(AP Photo/Chuck Burton)

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans who signed contracts to buy

homes fell in October for the fifth straight month. Higher mortgage rates, price increases and the 16-day partial government

shutdown held back sales. The National Association of Realtors said Monday that its seasonally adjusted pending home sales

index dipped 0.6 percent to 102.1. That's the lowest level since December. September's reading was revised slightly higher to 102.7. There is generally a one- to two-month lag between a signed contract and a completed sale. The drop suggests final sales will remain weak in the coming months. The Realtors group said the shutdown prevented the IRS from verifying incomes, a critical part of the mortgage-approval process. The group said that 17 percent of Realtors reported delays.

Sales may rebound a bit in November as purchases are completed. But sales are not expected to pick up much after that.

A limited supply of homes has pushed up prices in the past year. Prices of existing homes jumped 12 percent in September from the previous year, according to

real estate data provider CoreLogic. Mortgage rates have eased but remain nearly a point higher than they were in the spring. The average rate on a 30-year mortgage fell to 4.22 percent last week from 4.35 percent the week before. That's down from a peak in August of nearly 4.6 percent and still low by historical standards.

Last week, the Realtors said sales of existing homes fell 3.2 percent in October to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.12 million, down from a pace of 5.29 million in September and the slowest since June. Sales at an annual rate of about 5.5 million are consistent with a healthy market.

Sales should rise about 10 percent this year to 5.1 million compared with 2012, the Realtors group predicts. But it expects sales will be roughly flat next year. □



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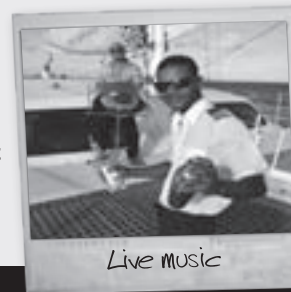
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Japan, China in war of words over airspace

MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A war of words between Japan and China over a territorial dispute escalated Monday, with each country summoning the other's ambassador and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe calling a newly declared Chinese maritime air defense zone dangerous and unenforceable.

A White House spokesman on Monday called the Chinese announcement over the weekend "unnecessary

and it is a very dangerous thing as well."

On Saturday, Beijing issued a map of the zone and a set of rules that say all aircraft must notify Chinese authorities and are subject to emergency military measures if they do not identify themselves or obey Beijing's orders.

Abe said the measures one-sidedly impose rules set by the Chinese military on all flights in the zone, and violate the freedom to fly above open sea, a general principle under

had a similar zone since the 1960s. Later Monday, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki summoned Chinese Ambassador Cheng Yonghua to protest the move in person, a day after Saiki's deputy protested to China by phone. Cheng balked at Japan's complaint, refusing to retract the measures.

"China believes it is the Japanese side that should withdraw its unreasonable demand," Cheng told reporters after meeting with Saiki. "But both of us should

Clashes in eastern Libya kill 9

DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

© 2013 New York Times

CAIRO - Clashes between hard-line Islamists and a local military unit broke out across Benghazi on Monday, killing at least nine people and wounding dozens in the latest flare-up in a struggle for control of the city.

The fighting pitted Ansar al-Shariah, a local hard-line Islamist group whose fighters were seen in the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi last fall, against an army unit known locally as "special forces," which defected from Moammar Gadhaifi's camp at the start of the uprising against him.

The melee followed the deaths of at least 43 people in Tripoli 10 days ago when out-of-town militiamen opened fire on civilians protesting their presence.

And both battles come as rival regional and ideological factions across the country are flexing their muscles in preparation for Libya's second attempt to elect a constitutional assembly that might lay the foundations for a new national government two years after the ouster of Gadhaifi.

The local authorities in Benghazi asked civilians to stay in their homes as the fighting continued into midday. Residents circulated pictures on the Internet that appeared to show Ansar al-Shariah's headquarters in flames.

Each side blamed the other for starting the violence but all acknowledged that the conflict had been building for more than a year.

The most extreme of Benghazi's several well-known Islamists militias, Ansar al-Shariah has rejected the transitional government as insufficiently theocratic and has maintained its own armed brigade outside government control. Its fighters retained control of a strategic checkpoint on the coastal road toward Tripoli, but also guarded a local hospital.

And since some of its fighters were seen participating in the attack that killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans, the group has become a target of special resentment and suspicion by non-Islamists across Benghazi.

Before they defected, soldiers from the "special forces" helped carry out Gadhaifi's crackdowns on Libya's Islamists, and a rivalry between the two factions has grown since his ouster.

As residents' resentment of Islamist militias has grown in the city, the "special forces" have sought to step forward and challenge the Islamists for control of the streets.

In recent months, the two forces have appeared to fight each other through campaigns of assassinations and bombings. Benghazi residents have been caught in the cross-fire.

The fighting in Tripoli that started on Nov. 15 was another flare-up of tensions among former rebel groups but without the same ideological divide.

A cluster of militias from the coastal city of Misrata began shooting at civilian demonstrators demanding an end to militia dominance of Libya, killing dozens and wounding many more. In the aftermath, residents called for a three-day general strike to demand that Misratans and other militias withdraw from the city, and many appear to have complied. □



The tiny islands in the East China Sea, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese are seen. The war of words between Japan and China over the territorial dispute escalated Monday, November 25, 2013.

(AP Photo/Kyodo News)

ily inflammatory."

Abe told a parliamentary session that the zone alters the state of affairs in the East China Sea and escalates a tense situation.

"The measures by the Chinese side have no validity whatsoever for Japan, and we demand China revoke any measures that could infringe upon the freedom of flight in international airspace," Abe said. "It can invite an unexpected oc-

international law. He also slammed China for showing the disputed islands, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese, as Chinese territory in the zone.

Since taking office almost a year ago, Abe has been spearheading a move to step up Japan's defense capability, citing threats from China's growing maritime and military presence in the region. Japan has

try to take cautionary steps in order to prevent unanticipated occurrences."

In Beijing, Assistant Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang met with Japanese Ambassador Kitera Masato to complain.

"The Japanese side is not entitled to make irresponsible remarks and malicious accusations against China," he said, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement. □

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Putin meets pope and Berlusconi on Rome visit

NICOLE WINFIELD

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin had a busy first day in Rome on Monday, going from the pope to a "Pussy Riot" protest to dinner at the palazzo of his old friend, Silvio Berlusconi.

Putin showed off his religious side during his visit to the Vatican, stopping to cross himself and kiss an icon of the Madonna that he gave Pope Francis. But Moscow's improving relations with the Vatican only went so far: Putin didn't invite Francis to visit.

After the 35 minute audience, Putin went across town to pay a courtesy call on Italian President Giorgio Napolitano. A few dozen people protesting Russia's detention of two members of the punk band "Pussy

Riot" tried to block his motorcade, toting posters reading: "We spit on Putin." He managed to get through, and then arrived at Berlusconi's Palazzo Grazioli.

Berlusconi promised a fully Italian dinner for Putin, whom the three-time Italian premier has entertained before at his Sardinian estate. The reunion was sure to buoy Berlusconi's spirits: The Italian Senate is due to vote Wednesday on whether to kick him out of Parliament following his tax fraud conviction.

It remains unclear whether Berlusconi will show his old friend the "Putin bed," inside the palazzo. The Russian leader gave the bed to Berlusconi; it gained notoriety when escort Patrizia D'Addario tape-recorded Berlusconi instructing her



Pope Francis and Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, shake hands for the media on the occasion of their private audience at the Vatican, Monday, Nov. 25, 2013. Putin and Francis met privately for 35 minutes Monday evening in the pope's private library.

(AP Photo/Claudio Peri, Pool)

to wait for him in it while he showered during a night they spent together in 2008. During his audience with Francis, Putin thanked the pope for his September letter to the Group of 20 meeting in St. Petersburg, in which Francis urged world leaders to abandon the "futile pursuit" of a military solution in Syria and lamented what he said were one-sided interests that had prevented a diplomatic end to the conflict. Francis mobilized hundreds of thousands of people around the globe to participate in a daylong fast and prayer for peace, as the U.S. threatened military strikes following an Aug. 21 chemical weapons attack near Damascus. □

Prosecutor argues to reinstate Amanda Knox guilty verdict

COLLEEN BARRY

Associated Press

FLORENCE, Italy (AP) — The prosecutor seeking to reinstate the conviction of Amanda Knox for the murder of her roommate urged an appeals court on Monday not to repeat mistakes he says were made by the court that freed her.

Prosecutor Alessandro Crini said Italy's highest court had "razed to the ground" the Perugia appellate court's 2011 decision to throw out the guilty verdicts.

The high court ordered a fresh appeals trial, this time in Florence, saying the earlier appeals decision was full of contradictions.

Knox and Sollecito were convicted in 2009 of killing Meredith Kercher, Knox's 21-year-old British room-

mate, who was found with her throat slit in her bedroom in 2007. They were sentenced to 26 years and 25 years in jail, respectively. After being freed in 2011, Knox returned to the United States and has not returned to Italy for the current trial. Knox and Sollecito denied any involvement in the killing, saying they weren't in the apartment at the time and had no motive.

A third defendant, Ivory Coast-born Rudy Guede, was convicted in a separate trial of sexually assaulting and stabbing Kercher. His 16-year sentence, reduced in appeal from 30 years, was upheld by Italy's highest court in 2010. Prosecutors have argued that the murder was carried out by more than one person. □

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Dubai world Expo bid stirs worry of second bubble

AYA BATRAWY
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Climb Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, and you might spot an unusual banner: A flag placed by six climbers emblazoned with the logo of Dubai's bid to host a World's fair in 2020.

In Dubai, the logo is also plastered on police cars, convenience store bags, storefronts, taxis, receipts, government buildings and even on new resident visa forms. Countdowns to Wednesday's decision of who will host Expo 2020 also appear on one of Dubai's main highways and in one of its main English-language daily newspaper.

Dubai's rulers say their futuristic city of skyscrapers is ideal to host the event. But their well-oiled public-relations campaign belies a worry among many in the United Arab Emirates city that increased building and real-estate speculation driven by the event could put it on the cusp of another financial crisis.

"People are betting on what's to come rather than what's really here," said Faris Mansour, director of Mubadala Pramerica Real Estate Investors. He spoke on a panel at a recent real estate conference during a discussion on whether Dubai was in recovery or not.

While the World's fair no longer holds the popularity of other global events like the Olympics or World Cup, it remains a chance for millions of people from around the world to discuss and see the business of the future. Dubai is competing with Yekaterinburg in Russia, Izmir in Turkey and Sao Paulo to host Expo 2020.

Dubai's rulers say the city of 2.2 million people —

most of them foreigners — is a perfect fit to host the exhibition. It is home to the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, one of the world's largest malls, a man-made island shaped like a palm tree and an indoor ski slope.

A spending spree is already underway in Dubai for the expo — even before officials announce this week which city will host it. Authorities say they will build an entirely new city with a

"We are ready to host the world in 2020 and we are fully capable of organizing the best event ever in the history of this global gathering," Dubai ruler Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid wrote on his Twitter page last month.

Despite the Dubai expo's planned theme of sustainability, not all World's fairs have been profitable. The last world expo in Shanghai in 2010 was a success that showcased China's rise as

to Dubai for the six-month-long event.

Since the United Arab Emirates' unification 42 years ago, Dubai has evolved from a desolate corner of the Arabian Peninsula into a global hub for business. Its residential property boom over the years has been a magnet for the world's super rich. Recent investors include Syrian, Libyan and Egyptian millionaires waiting out unrest back home. Regional instability com-



In this November, 2013 photo, vehicles pass by a tower with a sign that reads, "Keep Calm, No Bubble," at the Marina district in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The logo for Dubai's bid to host the Expo 2020 reflects a push by the city's leaders to avert another financial crisis like the one that brought the city to its knees in 2008. Dubai saw property values slashed by more than half and the city's government needed a \$10 billion bailout from oil-rich neighbor Abu Dhabi in 2009.

(AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili)

university around the exhibition pavilion that would host the expo in what is now still a desert near the Jebel Ali seaport, one of the world's busiest. That's where the Emirates is building what it hopes will be the world's biggest airport.

The city's logo for the expo, an interconnected, geometrical Arabesque design, also mirrors how its leaders see Dubai: as a geographical link between Europe and Asia.

a modern industrial power. However, the Hanover, Germany, fair in 2000 drew far fewer visitors than expected and lost an estimated \$1 billion.

Dubai estimates a successful Expo 2020 bid will generate \$23 billion between 2015 and 2021, or 24 percent of the city's gross domestic product. They say total financing will cost \$8.4 billion. They believe some 17.5 million visitors from outside the Emirates will come

combined with efforts to rebound from the financial crisis have resulted in soaring Dubai property rates, up by around 20 percent since last year — the world's largest year-on-year average price increase. In some neighborhoods, rents skyrocketed by more than 40 percent.

Lurking beneath Dubai's massive push are fears it is headed toward another real estate bubble whether it wins the bid or not. □

People flee, are deported to Haiti after border killings

EVENS SANON
TRENTON DANIEL
Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

(AP) — More than 100 additional people have either been deported to Haiti or left on their own accord from neighboring Dominican Republic after an elderly Dominican couple was killed, authorities and a spokesman for a migrant advocacy group said Monday. The number of Haitians and people of Haitian descent who've been expelled or volunteered to leave has reached at least 350, said Lolo Sterne, coordinator for Haiti's Office of Migration. Authorities had reported a total of 252 people expelled as of Sunday. Migrant advocates have reported slightly higher numbers. The expulsions and voluntary departures follow violence that engulfed the town of Neiba in the southwestern corner of the Dominican Republic. The couple was slain last week during an apparent burglary near the border between the two countries and a Dominican mob retaliated by killing a Haitian man. Migrant advocates say many of the deported people first went to a police station seeking refuge, and that some of them volunteered to leave the country because they feared being victims of mob violence. Dominican police issued a statement saying the people weren't expelled from the country, but rather went to the police station because they feared reprisals and asked authorities to escort them to the border so they could cross it themselves. □

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Brazilians wary over renewed mass beach robberies

JENNY BARCHFIELD
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — With the tropical sun blazing from a near cloudless sky and waves lapping at golden sand, it seemed like a perfect day at the beach in Rio de Janeiro.

Then dozens of marauding youths descended en masse, snatching beach bags and cellphones, ripping gold chains from necks and setting off sandy stampedes by panicked beachgoers.

Such mass beach robberies were once a hair-raisingly frequent occurrence, but they had largely disappeared in recent years as this notoriously dangerous city got markedly safer — a trend credited to a galloping economy and police operations that wrested control of more than 200 “favela” hillside slums from the drug-dealing gangs that controlled them.

But the “arrastoes,” or “big drags” as they’re known in Portuguese, are back, and the gang raids on Nov. 15 and 20 spread alarm through a city gearing up to host soccer’s World Cup in just over six months and the Summer Olympics in 2016.

“What’s happening in Rio today represents a power play,” wrote Mer-

val Pereira, a columnist for the Rio’s newspaper O Globo. “Since the police’s pacification program was put into place, the bandits have been losing control over large swaths of the territory in which they used to act . and are looking to take back what was theirs.”

Police initially dismissed the incidents as stampedes caused by fights, but later acknowledged they were mass robberies. Officials announced they will step up weekend beach patrols and set up mobile police posts to make it easier for victims to report crimes. Local newspapers have reported that 15 people, most of them minors, were detained following Wednesday’s incident on Arpoador beach, which saw repeated stampedes as swarms of young people swooped down on bathers and the police gave chase. Globo television network broadcast images of officers chasing shirtless youths across streets and stones being hurled at officers as they processed those detained.

“People were running all over the place, and I didn’t know where to go for safety,” said Luana Santos, a 24-year-old vender of bottled water. “I was



In this Nov. 20, 2013 photo, municipal guards chase a gang of thieves that robbed bags and wallets from beachgoers on Arpoador beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Gang raids known as “arrastoes,” or “big drags” in Portuguese, spread alarm through a city gearing up to host soccer’s World Cup in just over six months and the Summer Olympics in 2016.

(AP Photo/Marcelo Carnaval, Agencia o Globo)

really panicked and really frightened. I hope this is not going to keep on happening.” Rio state Security Secretary Jose Beltrame told CBN radio these were the first instances of mass beachside robberies in Rio in seven years and said two of those detained on Wednesday were minors. Ezequiel Soliva de Andrade, a 39-year-old wait-

er at a bar on the boardwalk on Arpoador, said he holds little hope the extra policing will do much to stop the crime.

“Every time the sun comes out, there are tons of robberies,” Andrade said, adding that the problem has gotten much worse over the past three months. “These guys don’t care whether there are cops

there are not. They just take off running and there are so many of them going in all different directions that they’re rarely caught.”

Andrade rattled off a long list of muggings and other attacks on beachgoers and neighborhood residents that he’s witnessed over the past few months. He said the crime wave is scaring people away. □

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European Union, Russia face off before summit

RAF CASERT

Associated Press

LANAKEN, Belgium (AP) —

Little over two decades ago, Moscow ruled Lithuania with an iron fist. Now, the Baltic nation holds the presidency of the European Union.

It symbolizes a breathtaking change in Europe's political landscape, in which nations once thought to be eternally in the Soviet thrall have become free, vibrant EU nations. This week, Lithuania hosts a summit hoping to seal an economic cooperation pact that would weaken Russia's grip over eastern Europe even more. But Moscow isn't giving up authority over its former backyard without a fight. And the contrasting dramas playing out within Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia — the three nations involved in the association deal with the EU — indicate just how hard the Kremlin plays this power game.

Moscow has been issuing threats of economic punishment to keep the three nations within its sphere of influence. The results are mixed: Moldova and Georgia plan to go ahead with the agreement, while Ukraine stunned many of its own people last week by pulling out.

The stakes are high, with the economic and political future of some 55 million people — 46 million in Ukraine alone — hanging in the balance.

For the countries at the tipping point, the plans to embrace the West in a pact that could eventually open the way to EU membership is producing political foment rarely seen since they became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991.

While the opportunities are great, Russia wastes no chance to speak of the dangers of crossing Moscow.

"Each country can of course develop those relations — but without forgetting the implications," Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin warned ominously. Ukraine showed

a keen awareness of such implications this past Thursday, when it abruptly backed out of the partnership deal in a move widely seen as submission to Moscow's will.

That unleashed a demonstration of some 50,000 in the center of Kiev on Sunday demanding that Ukraine's government go forward with plans to seal

sians "have been threatening Moldova with both cut offs in gas supplies as well as cut-offs in wine exports." As a result, Philippe Van Houtvin was swirling the stuff of geopolitics in his wine glass when, at this autumn's Lanaken Winefair, he sought to entice buyers with a 2004 Amaro de la valea Perjei, a heady red Moldovan vintage.

to Moldovan vineyards.

The Asconi winery from Puhai, just outside Moldova's capital of Chisinau, was hit by an earlier 2006 Russian ban — this one also for alleged poor quality. Moldova claimed that prohibition, too, was politically motivated, since it came in the wake of new customs rules affecting a pro-Russian separatist province in

survive without the Russian market," Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze said in an interview with The Associated Press. "In the last seven years, we did not have this access and the Georgian economy did not collapse."

Yet Russia has also made clear it has control over the natural gas pipelines that supply Moldova and



A worker at the Cricova winery loads sparkling wine bottles in the production facility, outside of Chisinau, Moldova.

(AP Photo/John McConnico)

the agreement. But on Monday, it looked like Moscow had won the fight — with Ukraine appearing to stick by its decision to pull out.

In Moldova, some 15,000 rallied against closer EU ties over the weekend with some waving Communist-era flags. But — while a substantial force — the pro-Russia camp appears to be a minority: Three weeks ago, some 100,000 people demonstrated in favor of EU relations.

For months now, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt has spoken of "brutal Russian pressure ... of the sort that we have not seen in Europe for a very long time."

"This is economic warfare," Bildt said, adding the Rus-

It used to be that Moldovan wines were the toast of czars and members of the Soviet elite alike. But, like its vintners, the landlocked nation of 3.6 million people is now looking west.

"Moldova is willing to go more toward Europe. Their export of wines in general has increased and it is increasing every day," said Van Houtvin, marketing director of the Moldovino wine dealership in Belgium. In a move that was seen by many as Russian bullying, Moscow in September banned Moldovan wine, claiming it did not meet quality standards. The 28-nation EU has no such health concerns, and, in an immediate tit-for-tat, further opened its market of a half-billion consumers

Moldova. Asconi reacted by starting to look for new export markets.

"The political risk for us, as a small company, became too big," said Asconi manager Andrei Sarbu. "It was too risky to base such a large percentage of exports on only one market," the Russian. "We no longer work with them since 2008."

"The European market is much more stable," he said.

Brandishing bans and embargoes could also work against Russia in the long run. Just ask Georgia, which has also had to grapple with Russian wine bans, trade threats and even a war in his brief history since independence. "We showed that we can

Ukraine. Rogozin, the Russian deputy prime minister, has warned that if Chisinau initials the cooperation agreement with the EU, it may no longer get all the Russian gas it wants in winter. "Russia is not really interested in having normal, equal relationship with neighboring countries," said Panjikidze, especially when they are as small as Georgia, with 4.5 million people, or Moldova. Proponents of the deal say it should pay dividends.

"The impact of the (Vilnius) agreement on Moldovan GDP will be worth one year of growth," said Georg Zachmann, a research fellow at Bruegel think tank. "That is because it is easier for Moldova to export to the EU." □



A Royal Visit to the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa



PALM BEACH - The Dutch royals, His Excellency King Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima visited Aruba last week. It was an official visit, and the first one since the king and queen's inauguration at the end of April 2013, when Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands abdicated in favor of her son Crown Prince Willem-Alexander, who became the King with his wife Princess Maxima by his side



tion in its ballroom for The Oranje Fonds, the largest national Dutch fund in the social field, which annually spends millions on more than 7,000 social initiatives in the Dutch Caribbean and in the Netherlands. The Orange Fund which aims to promote involvement in society met with the royals in the Grand Caribbean Ballroom, reports Fransisca van Esta Tjallingii, Senior Catering and Convention Services Manager. Our pictures depict the arrival of the royals at the resort. They were warmly greeted in the lobby by resort executives and General Manager Mark Lytleton-Frances and Queen Maxima was presented with flowers. □



as Queen consort. The royals visited Aruba before, as Crown Prince and Princess, and even stayed at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa, their home away from home, on a number of previous official occasions. On their current visit, while they did not stay at the resort, they still held a recep-



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ONE VS THIRTY:

Countdown for the 5K GM's Charity Challenge Run has begun!

PALM BEACH - In June this year, the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa launched a series of 5K GM's Challenge Runs in order to motivate the hotel staff to be healthier and more conscious of their eating habits and their physical condition.

General Manager Mark Lyttleton Frances, who is 100% committed to the well-being of his staff members, reports he was overweight in the past but self-discipline, healthy eating habits and regular exercise helped him achieve a leaner body frame and optimal physical condition. Determined to inspire his staff to do the same he started planning moderately-challenging 5K routes, for resort employees.

The 5K GM's challenge initiative started small, but the interest grew and more people started train-



ing with the goal to defeat the GM at his own 5K GM's Challenge Runs.

A total of three previous

GM's Challenge Runs already took place in June, August and October, and up to this moment GM

Mark Lyttleton Frances remains the undefeated champion.

On December 14th, 2013, this might change as the fourth 5K GM's challenge will be run, the last one for this year, requiring a small contribution for the winner's Charity Foundation of choice. Each participant will contribute a small amount of money, and if the GM is defeated, he will pay the complete amount to the winner's Charity Foundation of choice and all participants will receive their money back.

To mark the occasion as special, participants will be wearing uniform shirts and shorts, pictured here, which were created by the challenger, GM Mark Lyttleton Frances.

The decisive, last run will take place on December 14th at 5pm, leaving from the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa towards Eagle Beach and La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino, then back.

Incidentally, after seeing the positive reaction and interest among employees, motivated and

inspired in the direction of health awareness, the resort decided to make the 5K GM's Charity Challenge an international event, inviting all General Managers of Radisson & Country Inn managed & owned hotels to start their own challenge runs in 2014, and dispatch their winners to Aruba, to participate in the last run taking place here, in December 2014.

The resort here will provide accommodations for the participant and also pitch in for the participant's meals during his/her stay, explain Lourdes Gietel Geerman, Executive Assistant Manager, and the resort will also have a special package in place for all employees, families and friends that would like to travel together with the international hotel representative, to cheer him/her on during the event.

With thirty participants racing against the General Manager, this promises to be a very interesting race. The Countdown for the 5K GM's Charity Challenge Run, on December 14th, has begun! □

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WEST PUNT - Golfers have been looking forward to it the entire year, but now the time is here: the Plaza Golf Open 2013, this year its wearing the name: Hans Nooter Memorial Tournament, is ready for lift-off. Held on Saturday, November 30, this fun golf event will see its shotgun start at 1 pm at the fantastic Tierra del Sol golf course. The format is a two-men scramble and the expectation is that between 40 and 50 teams will register. "This is a tournament without any big prizes, it is all about having fun," tell the long-time participants, all regulars of Café the Plaza in the Renaissance Marketplace.

After playing 18 holes, the tired golfers are expected back at Café the Plaza for a few reviving drinks and a bite to eat. They can expect an excellent buffet complete with a salad bar before the prizes are handed out. Prizes will be given out to the best three teams, for the Longest Drive and Closest to the Pin winners.

Registration for the tournament is possible at Tierra del Sol at 586-7800 with golf pro Adam Williams. □



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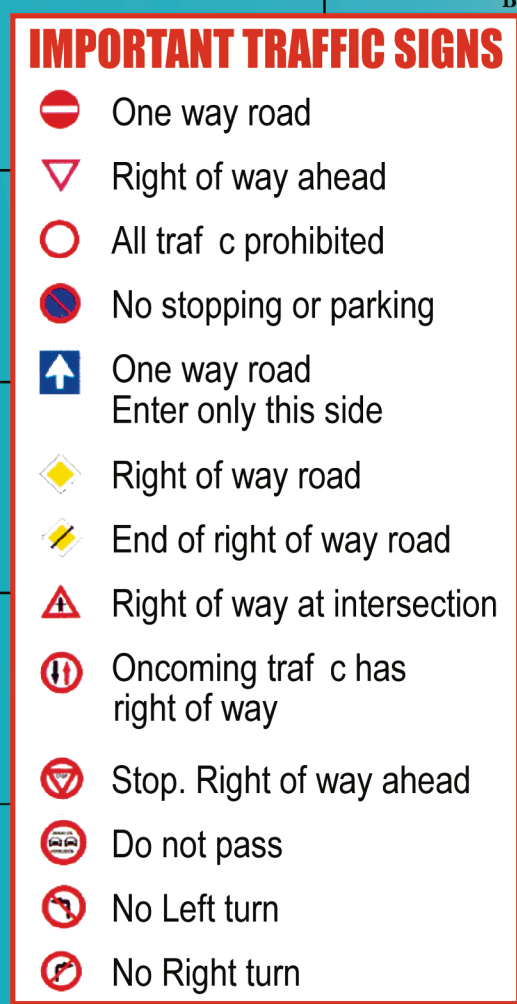
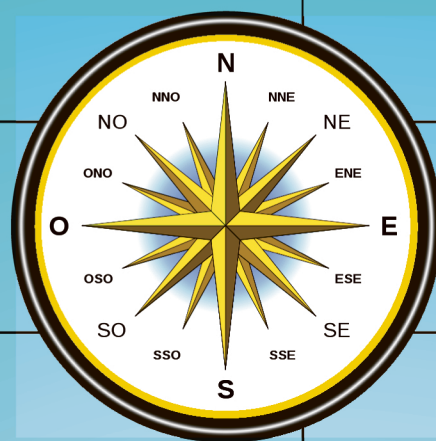
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Chicago Bulls star Derrick Rose out for season

ANDREW SELIGMAN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago Bulls star Derrick Rose is out for the remainder of the season.

The team said that Rose had successful surgery Monday morning in Chicago to repair a torn medial meniscus in his right knee. He was hurt Friday night at Portland.

The 2011 NBA MVP missed all of last season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee in Chicago's 2012 playoff opener against Philadelphia. He has played in just 50 NBA games — 49 in the regular season and that lone playoff game — since the Bulls' run to the Eastern Conference finals during his MVP season.

The latest injury occurred in the third quarter against the Trail Blazers.

He lost his footing while trying to change direction to get back on defense when Nicolas Batum stole a pass from Joakim Noah and started the other way. Rose limped across the court and couldn't put any weight on his knee. After the Blazers scored, he came out of the game



In this Friday, Nov. 22, 2013 file photo, Chicago Bulls guard Derrick Rose is shown during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Portland Trail Blazers in Portland, Ore.

Associated Press

during a timeout.

It didn't appear there was any contact on the play. Rose was unable to return and was on crutches afterward.

With Rose back, the Bulls were expected to challenge LeBron James and the Miami Heat for supremacy in the Eastern Conference and contend for their first championship since the Michael Jordan-Scottie Pippen era. Instead, they're in a familiar spot — trying to get by without their cornerstone player.

"We, of course, feel very badly for Derrick. He's in good spirits, about as well as can be expected under the circumstances, and he's already thinking about his rehab," coach Tom Thibodeau said Sunday, before the team announced their star was gone for the season. "Typical Derrick. He's concerned about his team, his teammates."

The top-seeded Bulls bowed out in the first round of the playoffs in 2012 against Philadelphia after Rose went down and fell into a season-long holding pattern without him last year, waiting for a return that didn't happen.

His recovery took on a circus-like feel. Fans saw him shooting and dunking before games last season and wondered why he wasn't playing, particularly as the Bulls fought through injuries and illnesses down the stretch. Adidas released videos documenting his progress, but Rose mostly stayed in the background, saying little about his recovery. That changed midway through the season.

There was also speculation that Rose's camp was advising him to sit out last season and that there was a rift with the organization, particularly after older brother Reggie Rose ripped management for standing pat at the trade deadline. But Derrick Rose denied that. All of that faded into the background with Rose back this season — and insisting he could regain his MVP form.

He was off to an up-and-down start. He was averaging 15.9 points and was shooting just over 35 percent.

He was looking a little better in his last two games, with 19 points in a loss at Denver and 20 against Portland. □



The net falls on Nashville Predators goalie Marek Mazanec (39), of the Czech Republic, as Predators defenseman Seth Jones (3) checks Phoenix Coyotes center Martin Hanzal, of the Czech Republic, in the first period of an NHL hockey game Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

Gustavsson, Red Wings beat Sabres 3-1

BUFFALO, New York (AP) —

Jonas Gustavsson made 21 saves, including a stop on Steve Ott's penalty shot, as the Detroit Red Wings sent the Buffalo Sabres to their fourth straight loss, 3-1 on Sunday.

Johan Franzen, Daniel Alfredsson and Darren Helm scored for the Red Wings. Henrik Zetterberg had an assist for his 700th career

point.

Cody Hodgson scored Buffalo's only goal. The Sabres are winless since a victory in interim head coach Ted Nolan's first game on Nov. 15.

Carolina 4, Ottawa 1
Ryan Miller made 32 saves for the Sabres.

Carolina's Eric Staal had a goal and two assists as the Hurricanes beat the Otta-

wa Senators 4-1.

Jason Spezza gave Ottawa the lead 1:07 in with his 10th goal of the season, but Carolina scored three times in the second period. Cam Ward stopped 35 shots for the Hurricanes, and Patrick Dwyer, Tuomo Ruutu and rookie Elias Lindholm each scored. Staal scored an empty-net goal with 2:29 left. □

Saskatchewan beats Hamilton 45-23 in Grey Cup

REGINA, Saskatchewan (AP) — Kory Sheets ran for a record 197 yards and two touchdowns to leading the Saskatchewan Roughriders over the Hamilton Tiger-Cats 45-23 Sunday night in the Canadian Football League's 101st Grey Cup championship game.

Sheets, who briefly played for the Miami Dolphins and Carolina Panthers, broke the Canadian Football League championship game rushing mark of 169 yards set in 1956 by Edmonton's Johnny Bright. Sheets was especially impressive in the first half. The former Purdue star ran for 128 yards and a TD in leading Saskatchewan to a 31-6 advantage, and was picked as the game's Most Valuable Player.

"The one thing that led us to a dominant performance was that the fans were unreal," Roughriders coach Corey Chamblin said. "It was unreal. From pregame

warmup I knew it was going to be tough for those guys. I looked at them and said 'I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.' I mean, it was ridiculous. The whole thing was green."

Sheets agreed.

"I said it before the game started, this is not a neutral crowd," he said. "The fans are going to be in here knocking and rocking and they proved it."

Darian Durant threw three touchdown passes as Saskatchewan won its fourth Grey Cup and first since 2007. Geroy Simon caught two of the TD tosses. Saskatchewan's Chris Getzlaf was chosen as the game's top Canadian. His brother, NHL star Ryan, is captain of the Anaheim Ducks.

Quarterback Henry Burris, who rallied Hamilton from a 24-10 deficit to beat Toronto 36-24 in the East final, ran for an 18-yard TD that helped the Ticats pull

within 31-16. Sheets ran 5 yards for a score with just over five minutes remaining to keep Saskatchewan in control.

"Everything, the pass, the run, protection was great, the defense was great," Sheets said. "Special teams was great. It was just our night."

Hamilton was trying to win the CFL title for the first time since 1999, but quickly fell behind.

Sheets and Jock Sanders ran for TDs before Durant, a former North Carolina standout, hit Simon on a 42-yard scoring strike with 1:46 left in the second quarter. Saskatchewan set a Grey Cup record for most first-half points despite three fumbles by Durant.

Actor Tom Hanks and comedian Martin Short were in the crowd on a chilly day with brisk winds.

It was a disappointing end for Hamilton. Burris, Andy Fantuz and coach Kent



Saskatchewan Roughriders quarterback Darian Durant hoists the Grey Cup after beating the Hamilton Tiger-Cats in the Grey Cup football game Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013 in Regina, Saskatchewan. Associated Press

Austin were all former Riders looking to lead Hamilton to its first Grey Cup win since 1999.

"We didn't make enough plays, period," Austin said. "We played a better football team today. They were just better than we were. They were more physical, they were

stronger. We didn't make near as many plays as we could have, missed too many throws, dropped too many balls on offence which killed a lot of our drives. They converted a lot of second downs, especially in the first half. We just dug too deep of a hole." □

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NFL Capsules

Gostkowski FG gives Pats 34-31 OT win over Broncos

The Associated Press
FOXBOROUGH, Massachusetts (AP) — Stephen Gostkowski kicked a 31-yard field goal for New England after a misplayed punt return by Denver, lifting the Patriots to a 34-31 overtime victory over the Broncos on Sunday.

Denver's Tony Carter ran into Ryan Allen's punt after it landed and Nate Ebner recovered for New England at the Broncos 13-yard line. After Tom Brady ran twice to line up the kick, Gostkowski connected for his 21st successful field goal attempt.

Brady threw for three touchdowns to lead the Patriots (8-3) back from a 24-0 halftime deficit to a 31-24 lead as New England scored on its first five possessions of the second half. Then Peyton Manning threw an 11-yard scoring pass to Demaryius Thomas for the Broncos (9-2), tying it at 31.

CHARGERS 41, CHIEFS 38
KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AP) — Philip Rivers threw for 392 yards and three touchdowns, the final one a 26-yarder to Seyi Ajirotutu with 24 seconds remaining to give the San Diego Chargers a victory over Kansas City and end a three-game losing streak.

The Chiefs had taken the lead when Alex Smith hit Dwayne Bowe for a go-ahead score with 1:22 left. But the Chargers (5-6) still had two timeouts, and they used both as they quickly move downfield. Ajirotutu's TD in tight coverage was just his third catch of the season.

It also represented the eighth and final lead change in the game. Smith threw for 292 yards and three touchdowns for the Chiefs, who dropped their second straight after a 9-0 start.

They also lost top pass rushers Tamba Hali and Justin Houston to injuries and now have to turn their attention to the Denver Broncos next week.

Jamaal Charles added 115 yards rushing and two touchdowns. Donnie Av-



New England Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman (11) scores a against touchdown Denver Broncos strong safety Mike Adams (20) and defensive end Shaun Phillips (90) in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013, in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

ery had four catches for 91 yards and a score as Kansas City produced its best point total of the season.

PACKERS 26, VIKINGS 26
GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AP) — Backup quarterback Matt Flynn threw for 218 yards to help the Packers storm back from a 16-point deficit, but Minnesota and Green Bay could only muster field goals in overtime.

Mason Crosby hit from 20 yards at 10:28 of the extra period and Blair Walsh connected from 35 with 3:54 left.

Greg Jennings, playing his first game at Lambeau Field as a member of the Vikings (3-8-1), dropped a third-down pass with 2:11 left. The Packers (5-5-1) also stumbled on their next possession.

One last chance for the Vikings went nowhere with 1 second left, and the teams walked off with the first tie in the NFL since the Rams and 49ers ended 24-24 on Nov. 11, 2012. It was the first game under the tiebreaking rules instituted in 2012 that ended in a tie after both teams kicked field goals to begin the extra period.

It was the second time a game had each team

make field goals to open overtime; Houston won the other last November over Jacksonville.

COWBOYS 24, GIANTS 21
EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Tony Romo threw two touchdowns and led a drive that set up Dan Bailey's 35-yard field goal on the final play. Dallas ended the Giants' four-game winning streak and most of their playoff hopes.

The victory moved the Cowboys (6-5) into a first-place tie with idle Philadelphia in the NFC East and left the Giants (4-7) wondering about what they gave away in two losses to Dallas.

Romo hit two crucial third-down passes on the 14-play drive that covered the final 4:45 after New York tied the game on a 4-yard touchdown pass from Eli Manning to Louis Murphy Jr. and a 2-point conversion run by Andre Brown.

Romo hit Jason Witten on TDs of 20 and 2 yards, and Dallas got a defensive touchdown on a 50-yard fumble return by Jeff Heath.

BUCCANEERS 24, LIONS 21
DETROIT (AP) — Matthew Stafford's fourth interception went in and out of

Calvin Johnson's hands to rookie Johnathan Banks inside the Tampa Bay 5 in

the final minute, allowing the Buccaneers to hold on. Tampa Bay (3-8) has won three straight after losing its first eight, joining the 1978 St. Louis Cardinals as the only team to do that.

Tampa Bay rookie Mike Glennon, meanwhile, avoided mistakes. Glennon was 14 of 21 for 247 yards and threw two touchdowns to Tiquan Underwood, whose second score was an 85-yard reception early in the fourth quarter.

The Lions (6-5) have lost two straight for the first time this season. They can blame five turnovers for throwing away a chance to improve their playoff positioning because no one in the NFC North won Sunday.

Johnson had seven receptions for 115 yards, but he and the Lions didn't take advantage of the Bucs playing the second half without cornerback Darrelle Revis (groin). □

Fan plunges from Oakland Coliseum deck; 2 injured

OAKLAND, California (AP) — A woman jumped from the third level deck of NFL team the Oakland Raiders' home stadium on Sunday, injuring herself and a man who pleaded with her not to jump and tried to catch her, authorities said.

The woman, who was not identified, plunged about 45 feet (14 meters) after the Raiders lost 23-19 to the Tennessee Titans and as fans were filing out of the stadium, O.co Coliseum officials said in a statement.

A good Samaritan who tried to break her fall was injured in the process, the statement said.

Alameda County Sheriff's Sgt. J.D. Nelson told the Oakland Tribune the woman went to a seating area that was covered by a tarp and appeared to be alone when she jumped from the upper level of the deck. The man who was on the concourse level saw her and repeatedly shouted, "don't do it," Nelson said.

"He saved her life quite honestly, at his own expense," Nelson said. "This guy 100 percent saved her life. She'd be dead now."

Nelson said the woman was taken to the hospital in "very critical" condition. The man was taken to the hospital with serious injuries and is expected to survive, police said.

On the NFL opening day this year, a fan died from a fall off a pedestrian overpass outside Candlestick Park in San Francisco, and two others were injured when a railing collapsed at the Colts game against the Raiders in Indianapolis. □

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APNewsBreak: Ex-NHLers sue league on concussions

FREDERIC J. FROMMER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ten former National Hockey League players, including All-Star defenseman Gary Leeman, claimed in a class-action lawsuit that the league hasn't done enough to protect players from concussions.

The lawsuit seeks damages and court-approved, NHL-sponsored medical monitoring for the players' brain trauma and/or injuries, which they blame on their NHL careers. It was filed in federal court in Washington on behalf of players who retired on or before February 14 of this year and have suffered such injuries.

The suit comes just three months after the National Football League agreed to pay \$765 million to settle lawsuits from thousands of former players who developed dementia or other

concussion-related health problems — and in an era when more attention is being paid to the damages of head injuries sustained in sports.

Among other things, the suit claims that:

— The NHL knew or should have known about scientific evidence that players who sustain repeated head injuries are at greater risk for illnesses and disabilities both during their hockey careers and later in life.

— Even after the NHL created a concussion program to study brain injuries affecting NHL players in 1997, the league took no action to reduce the number and severity of concussions during a study period



In this photo taken with a fisheye lens, Columbus Blue Jackets' David Savard, right, crashes into the glass after missing a check on Vancouver Canucks' Alex Burrows, left, during first-period NHL hockey game action in Vancouver, British Columbia, Friday, Nov. 22, 2013.

Associated Press

from 1997 to 2004. "Plaintiffs relied on the NHL's silence to their detriment," the suit says.

— The league didn't do anything to protect players from unnecessary harm until 2010, when it made it a penalty to target a player's head.

"The NHL's active and purposeful concealment of the severe risks of brain injuries exposed players to unnecessary dangers they could have avoided had the NHL provided them with truthful and accurate information and taken appropriate action to prevent needless harm," the lawsuit says.

It argues that the league continues to contribute to

injuries today, by refusing to ban fighting and body-checking, and by employing "enforcers" whose main job is to fight or violently body-check opponents. And the lawsuit accuses the league of promoting a "culture of violence," in which players are praised for their fighting and "head-hunting" skills.

Leeman, who played for the Toronto Maple Leafs, Calgary Flames, Montreal Canadiens, Vancouver Canucks and St. Louis Blues from 1983-1996, suffered multiple concussions and sub-concussive impacts during his career, according to the lawsuit. Since his retirement, he's suffered from post-traumatic head

syndrome, headaches, memory loss and dizziness, the lawsuit says.

In addition to Leeman, the other ex-players on the lawsuit are: Bradley Aitken (Pittsburgh Penguins, Edmonton Oilers); Darren Banks (Boston Bruins); Curt Bennett (Blues, New York Rangers and Atlanta Flames); Richard Dunn (Buffalo Sabres and Calgary Flames); Warren Holmes, (Los Angeles Kings); Robert Manno, (Canucks, Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings); Blair James Stewart (Red Wings, Washington Capitals and Quebec Nordiques); Morris Titanic, (Sabres); and Rick Vaive (Canucks, Maple Leafs, Sabres, and Chicago Blackhawks).

In a statement, Vaive said players "were kept in the dark about the risks of concussions and many of the former NHL players are now suffering from debilitating head injuries from their time in the league. Hopefully this lawsuit will shine a light on the problem and the players will get the help they deserve."

The NHL didn't respond to requests for comment, but earlier this year, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said, "We have, on our own, a long history, going back to 1997, of taking concussions very seriously. We spend a lot of time, money and effort working with the players' association on player safety." □

NBA Capsules

Dudley, Redick lead Clippers' 121-82 rout of Bulls

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jared Dudley scored a season-high 21 points, and Chris Paul added 16 points and 17 assists, as the Los Angeles Clippers jumped all over the Chicago Bulls in Derrick Rose's absence for a 121-82 victory Sunday.

J.J. Redick scored 19 points and Blake Griffin had 15 points and 12 rebounds in the Pacific Division-leading Clippers' seventh win in nine games.

Los Angeles finished strong in a stretch of four games in five days, posting the biggest margin of victory over Chicago in franchise history.

Luol Deng scored 22 points as the Bulls got off to a rough start to their latest stretch without Rose, who tore cartilage in his right knee Friday night in Portland.

The 2011 NBA MVP headed home to Chicago to prepare for surgery on Monday, when Chicago should find out how long he'll be sidelined.

Kirk Hinrich had nine points and seven assists while starting in place of Rose, who missed last season while recovering from surgery on his left knee.

LAKERS 100, KINGS 86

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Reserve forward Xavier Henry scored 12 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and Pau Gasol had 20 points and 10 rebounds to lead Los Angeles over Sacramento.

Steve Blake finished with 12 assists, nine points and five rebounds. Blake, who has started all 14 games for the Lakers at point guard in place of the injured Steve Nash, has recorded double digits in assists in each of the last five.

The Lakers, back at .500 following their third straight victory, began a stretch of four consecutive games against teams with losing records (Washington, Brooklyn and Detroit).

Greivis Vasquez led Sacramento with 20 points and DeMarcus Cousins added

17 points, eight rebounds and seven assists.

THUNDER 95, JAZZ 73

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Kevin Durant scored 19 points and Serge Ibaka had 17 points and 11 rebounds to help Oklahoma City extend its best season-opening start at home with a win over struggling Utah. The Thunder (9-3) played without All-Star point guard Russell Westbrook, who sat out to rest his surgically repaired right knee.

Even without Westbrook, Oklahoma City's lead swelled to as many as 37 points in the third quarter. Durant, the NBA's leading scorer at 29.5 points per game, didn't play in the fourth quarter — finishing with nine rebounds and hitting 12 of 13 free throws.

The Thunder have won six straight at home to open the season, their best opening stretch since moving to Oklahoma City.

Enes Kanter and Rudy Gobert led the Jazz (1-14), losers of six straight games, with 10 points apiece.

PISTONS 109, NETS 97

NEW YORK (AP) — Reserve Rodney Stuckey scored a season-high 27 points as Detroit sent Brooklyn to a fifth straight loss and sole possession of last place in the Atlantic Division.

The Nets, with their enormous payroll and enormous



Los Angeles Clippers forward Blake Griffin, left, dunks as Chicago Bulls forward Mike Dunleavy looks on during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013.
Associated Press

expectations, fell to 3-10, a half-game behind the New York Knicks, and were hearing boos at Barclays Center in the second half.

Greg Monroe had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons, who bounced back

from consecutive losses to Atlanta. Brandon Jennings added 14 points and 10 assists, making all 10 free throws to make up for a 2-for-10 shooting performance.

Joe Johnson made eight 3-pointers and scored a

season-high 34 points, but the short-handed Nets couldn't overcome another cold night from Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett, who were a combined 7 for 22.

SUNS 104, MAGIC 96

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Goran Dragic scored 23 points and Gerald Green added 20 to lead Phoenix over Orlando.

Two days after stopping a four-game losing streak at Charlotte, the Suns took the lead early in the first quarter and never relinquished it.

After Orlando trimmed what had been a 14-point deficit to three late in the fourth quarter, Channing Frye made a difficult jumper and Dragic scored the game's next seven points to put it away.

Dragic made 10 of 17 shots and also had 13 assists. Frye finished with 14 points and seven rebounds.

Nikola Vucevic led Orlando with 20 points. Andrew Nicholson had 19 off the bench and Aaron Afflalo added 12 for the Magic, who have lost four straight games and seven of eight overall.

In other NBA games it was Detroit 109, Brooklyn 97; L.A. Clippers 121, Chicago 82; Phoenix 104, Orlando 96; Oklahoma City 95, Utah 73; and L.A. Lakers 100, Sacramento 86. □



In this Jan. 25, 2013 file photo, Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant goes up for a dunk during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz, in Los Angeles.
Associated Press

Lakers sign Bryant to 2-year extension

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers have signed All-Star guard Kobe Bryant to a 2-year contract extension.

General manager Mitch Kupchak made the anticipated announcement Monday, ending speculation that Bryant could end up with another team after this season.

"This is a very happy day for Lakers fans and for the Lakers organization," Kupchak said in a statement. "We've said all along that our priority and hope was to have Kobe finish his ca-

reer as a Laker, and this should ensure that that happens." Terms of the deal were not released. The fourth-leading scorer in NBA history hasn't played this season as he recovers from surgery on his torn Achilles tendon in April.

He returned to practice earlier this month but isn't sure when he'll be back in uniform. He said last week that he could adjust his game and contribute something to the Lakers right now, but he wants to make sure he's ready to play for the long haul

when he returns for his 18th NBA season.

Coach Mike D'Antoni has said Bryant will return whenever he says he's ready.

During his recovery, Bryant has spent plenty of time with Steve Nash, the 39-year-old point guard currently sidelined with the latest in a series of injuries. Nash has been out with nerve root irritation, a back problem stemming from a broken leg last season.

Bryant and Nash intend to be back in the Lakers' lineup together soon. □

New research aims to teach computers common sense

KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Researchers are trying to plant a digital seed for artificial intelligence by letting a massive computer system browse millions of pictures and decide for itself what they all mean.

The system at Carnegie Mellon University is called NEIL, short for Never Ending Image Learning. In mid-July, it began searching the Internet for images 24/7 and, in tiny steps, is deciding for itself how those images relate to each other. The goal is to recreate what we call common sense — the ability to learn things without being specifically taught.

It's a new approach in the quest to solve computing's Holy Grail: getting a machine to think on its own using a form of common sense. The project is being funded by Google and the Department of Defense's Office of Naval Research. "Any intelligent being needs to have common sense to make decisions," said Abhinav Gupta, a professor in the Carnegie Mellon Robotics Institute.

NEIL uses advances in computer vision to analyze and identify the shapes and colors in pictures, but it is also



In this Thursday, Nov. 21, 2013 photo, Abhinav Gupta stands near one of the computer clusters used in his research at one of the computer server areas on campus at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

slowly discovering connections between objects on its own. For example, the computers have figured out that zebras tend to be found in savannahs and that tigers look somewhat like zebras.

In just over four months, the network of 200 processors has identified 1,500 objects and 1,200 scenes and has connected the dots to make 2,500 associations.

Some of NEIL's computer-generated associations are

wrong, such as "rhino can be a kind of antelope," while some are odd, such as "actor can be found in jail cell" or "news anchor can look similar to Barack Obama."

But Gupta said having a computer make its own associations is an entirely different type of challenge than programming a supercomputer to do one thing very well, or fast. For example, in 1985, Carnegie Mellon researchers pro-

grammed a computer to play chess; 12 years later, a computer beat world chess champion Garry Kasparov in a match.

Catherine Havasi, an artificial intelligence expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said humans constantly make decisions using "this huge body of unspoken assumptions," while computers don't. She said humans can also quickly respond to some questions that would

take a computer longer to figure out. "Could a giraffe fit in your car?" she asked. "We'd have an answer, even though we haven't thought about it" in the sense of calculating the giraffe's body mass.

Robert Sloan, an expert on artificial intelligence and head of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois, Chicago, said the NEIL approach could yield interesting results because just using language to teach a computer "has all sorts of problems unto itself."

"What I would be especially impressed by is if they can consistently say 'zebra, zebra, zebra' if they see the animal in different locations," Sloan said of the computers.

Gupta is pleased with the initial progress. In the future, NEIL will analyze vast numbers of YouTube videos to look for connections between objects.

"When we started the project, we were not sure it would work," he said. "This is just the start."

Neither Mountain View, California-based Google Inc. nor the Office of Naval Research responded to questions about why they're funding NEIL, but there are some hints. □

Associated Press

New Jersey OKs Internet gambling for 6 casinos

WAYNE PARRY

Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey (AP) — New Jersey gambling regulators gave six casinos the green light to offer Internet gambling statewide on Monday.

Approved are the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa; the Tropicana Casino and Resort; Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino; the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort; Bally's Atlantic City and Caesars Atlantic City.

The state Division of Gaming Enforcement's decision, which came after more than four days of testing the technology involved in online betting and making

sure gamblers are within New Jersey, allows the state to join Nevada and Delaware as the only ones offering Internet gambling in America. It authorized six of the seven casinos that hold Internet gambling permits to immediately offer online gambling throughout New Jersey.

Division director David Rebutick didn't immediately have an estimate of how many people had logged on during the test period but said it had topped 10,000 fairly early during the test.

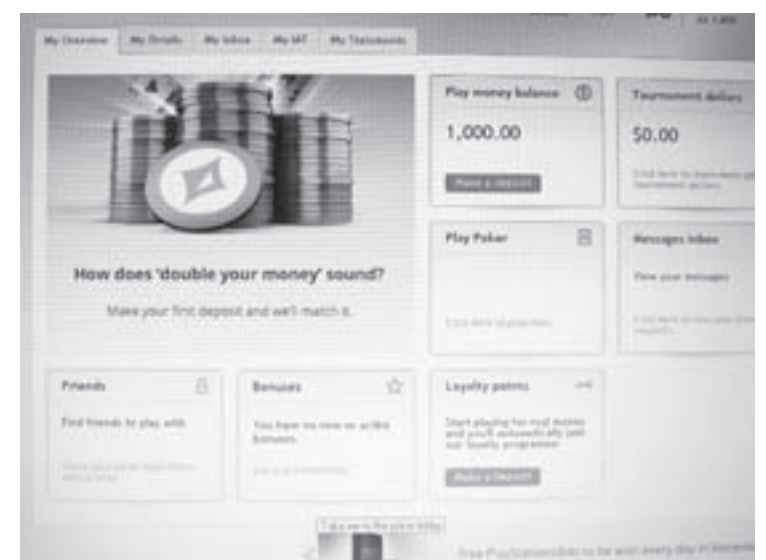
The Golden Nugget Atlantic City was required to continue testing its systems

before being cleared for unrestricted play. Rebutick didn't specify what was found to be lacking with the casino's systems.

"Hopefully in the near future they'll pass," Rebutick said. The Golden Nugget said being among the first casinos to launch an online gambling site wasn't important and it was waiting a week to start.

"It is more important to be among the best," company spokesman Thomas Winter said.

New Jersey began a five-day trial period of online gambling last Thursday. The purpose was to test the technology involved in



In this Nov. 1, 2013 photo, a computer screen in Atlantic City N.J. shows an account summary that new users of the global party-poker.com site will experience.

Associated Press

the games and determine whether the systems are ready for the entire state to log on and play.

During the test period, many users were locked out by geolocation software that

wrongly determined they weren't within New Jersey's borders. Rebutick said the geolocation problems are matters for the casinos and their technology partners to address. □

Stocks end mixed on quiet day; energy stocks fall

KEN SWEET
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—The stock market paused Monday, ending on a mixed note, after a string of records in recent weeks.

Investors had little company-specific news to digest, although the U.S. and other world powers reached a deal to limit Iran's nuclear program, an event that pushed down oil prices and energy stocks.

The slow day represented a pause in the market's strong run-up, capped by another milestone on Friday, when the Standard & Poor's 500 index closed above 1,800 for the first time.

Stocks have soared this year as a combination of solid corporate earnings, a strengthening economy and easy-money policies from the Federal Reserve have drawn investors to stocks. Stocks have also gained because they offer an attractive alternative to bonds, where interest rates remain close to all-time lows. Despite light trade, Monday did feature another market milestone. The Nasdaq rose as high

as 4,007.09, a level it hasn't seen since Sept. 7, 2000, during the dot-com bubble. The index ended up 2.92 points, or 0.1 percent, at 3,994.57.

The Dow Jones industrial

The biggest drags on the S&P 500 were energy stocks. Sunday's deal with Iran was the first significant progress in years to curtail that country's nuclear ambitions. It could reduce

supply and push oil prices lower in the long-term.

Oil fell 75 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$94.09. Energy companies Halliburton, Transocean and Schlumberger all fell 2 percent or

However, an increasing number of investors believe that stocks have run their course for 2013 and stocks are due for a pull-back soon.

"I would like to see this market take a breather," said Jim Lauder, a fund manager for Wells Fargo Advantage Dow Jones Target Date Funds.

While the Nasdaq is flirting with territory it hasn't seen in 13 years, the index is still down roughly 25 percent from its all-time high of 5,048.62 that it set on March 10, 2000. The index, although still technology heavy, is dominated by highly-profitable companies like Apple, Google and Amazon.

Trading was light Monday and is expected to remain limited all week. Stock and bond markets are closed Thursday in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. On Friday, the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq will close early. Approximately 2.98 billion shares traded hands Monday on the New York Stock Exchange, below the 3.35 billion that is typically traded on an average day. □



Trader Patrick McKeon, left, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Friday, Nov. 22, 2013. Stocks were mixed in early trading Friday as traders and investors lacked a catalyst to push the major indexes higher after strong gains this year.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

average rose eight points, or 0.1 percent, to 16,072.54. Meanwhile, the Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 2 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,802.48.

the risk of conflict, improve trade and boost global oil supplies by making it easier for Iran to sell its crude onto the global market. That could increase global

more. Even with Monday's decline, S&P 500 has risen seven straight weeks and is up 26 percent in 2013, its best performance in 15 years.

Aetna to buy international insurance provider InterGlobal

HARTFORD, Connecticut (AP) — Aetna Inc. plans to broaden its international reach with the acquisition of InterGlobal, a British company that offers private medical insurance for groups and individuals in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe.

The Hartford, Connecticut, health insurer did not reveal terms of the deal on Monday. It expects to complete the acquisition in the first half of next year and said it should be neutral to Aetna's 2014 results. Aetna covers more than 22 million people as the third-largest health insurer in the United States. It also runs an expatriate business that provides medical, dental and vision coverage, among other forms of insurance to people living overseas.

Chairman and CEO Mark Bertolini said in a statement



A sign for Aetna insurance is seen in front of their headquarters in Hartford, Conn. Aetna Inc. is planning to broaden its international reach with the acquisition of InterGlobal.

(AP Photo/Douglas Healey)

that the deal helps increase its presence in the interna-

tional market for individual and small- and mid-sized

business customers. He added that the demand

for international private medical coverage is being driven by the globalization of companies, the growing population of wealthy individuals in emerging economies and reform pushes by governments around the world to increase health care access. Last year, the largest U.S. insurer, UnitedHealth Group Inc., also announced international growth plans with its \$4.9 billion acquisition of Brazilian health benefits and care provider Amil Participacoes SA. Another competitor, Cigna Corp., also is expanding its international business.

Domestically, Aetna completed a \$6.9 billion acquisition of fellow insurer Coventry Health Care in May.

Aetna shares rose 70 cents to \$68.47 in morning trading Monday. Its shares have risen more than 46 percent so far this year. □

Wal-Mart names chief of international unit as new CEO

ELIZABETH A. HARRIS
© 2013 New York Times

As Wal-Mart enters a fiercely competitive holi-

the company's board of directors announced Monday that Michael T. Duke, its chief executive, would

Douglas McMillon, would replace him. McMillon, president of Wal-Mart International, will

the company announced. McMillon, 47, was also elected to the company's board of directors effective immediately and Duke will help with the transition. "Doug is uniquely positioned to lead our growing global company and to serve the changing customer, while remaining true to our culture and values," Rob Walton, chairman of Wal-Mart's board of directors, said in a statement. "He has broad experience - with successful senior leadership roles in all of Wal-Mart's business segments - and a deep understanding of the economic, social and technological trends shaping our world." McMillon, 47, joined Wal-Mart in 1984 as a summer associate in a Wal-Mart Distribution Center. He rejoined the company in 1990 and has spent much of his time at Wal-Mart in merchandising. From 2006 to 2009, he was president of Sam's Club.

Duke, 63, has been the

company's chief executive since 2009 and was vice chairman from 2005 to 2009.

"The opportunity to lead Wal-Mart is a great privilege," McMillon said in the company's statement. "Our company has a rich history of delivering value to customers across the globe and, as their needs grow and change, we will be there to serve them."

McMillon's new salary and compensation package was not released Monday. According to recent filings, Duke's salary was about \$1.3 million, and his total compensation was roughly \$20 million.

In recent weeks, Wal-Mart has been busily promoting its holiday deals, in one of the most competitive sales seasons in recent memory, driven partly because there is a very short window this year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The company's executives have noted that Wal-Mart's core customer base remains very budget-conscious, hit by the end of the payroll tax holiday earlier this year and uneasiness over events like the federal budget shutdown. At the busiest time of the year, major retailers are already slashing prices and many are chipping away at the lure of Black Friday deals by offering them even earlier.

McMillon's ascension is also occurring at a time when the company has announced major expansion plans in China.

David Tovar, vice president for corporate communications, said the timing of announcement about McMillon was dictated by the schedule of company board meetings - the November meeting is closest to the company's new fiscal year, which begins Feb. 1.

"This was solely his decision, a personal decision Mike made to retire at this point," Tovar said. "Other than playing a lot of golf, I don't think he's going to be working on anything at this point. He's had a long retail career, even before he got to Wal-Mart." □



Doug McMillon, President and CEO, Wal-Mart International, speaks at the shareholders meeting in Fayetteville, Ark. Wal-Mart Stores on Monday, Nov. 25, 2013 announced that CEO and President Mike Duke is stepping down from those posts, and named McMillon as his successor, effective Feb. 1, 2014.
(AP Photo/April L. Brown)

day season while still hampered by sluggish sales,

retire early next year and a longtime executive, C.

take the helm Feb. 1, just after the holiday season,

BlackBerry shakeup continues

ROB GILLIES
Associated Press
TORONTO (AP) — BlackBerry's interim chief executive

has shaken up BlackBerry's management team in a move seen as prelude to him taking the top job himself.

Chief Operating Officer Kristian Tear and Chief Marketing Officer Frank Boulben, both hired by recently ousted CEO Thorsten Heins, will leave the struggling smartphone maker.

And the company said Monday that Brian Bidulka is being replaced by James Yersh as chief financial officer. Yersh previously served as senior vice president and controller. Former Sybase CEO John Chen was brought in as the interim chief executive after negotiations to sell the Waterloo, Ontario, company collapsed this month. Chen also serves as executive chair of the board.

BlackBerry quickly lost dominance as the leading smartphone maker as the popularity of the iPhone

surged. The much-hyped BlackBerry 10 system, its latest phones, were a flop. The company disclosed in September that it would book nearly a billion dollars in losses related to unsold phones.

The company recently announced 4,500 layoffs, or 40 percent of its global workforce, and reported a quarterly loss of nearly \$1 billion.

Chen said he'll continue to align the management team with his priorities. "I look forward to working more directly with the talented teams of engineers, and the sales and marketing teams around the world to facilitate the BlackBerry turn-around," Chen said in a statement.

BGC analyst Colin Gillis said the reshaping of a leadership team is what a CEO does and that the company should just name Chen as CEO.

"You let whoever is going to be the CEO makes those decisions. It kind of bothers me because it just seems

like the search process is a farce. I mean the guy has a more than an \$80 million pay package. He's blown out every other top manager. That's not your decision to make as interim CEO," Gillis said.

Gillis expects Chen to be named CEO on Dec. 20 when BlackBerry reports third quarter earnings.

And spokesman Adam Emery said the company will have a further update on its leadership team Dec. 20. Emery said they will not have a chief marketing officer and a chief operating officer in its new organization structure. Gillis said one could infer that an enterprise focused business would have less need for marketing and a chief marketing officer than a consumer focused business. Chen, whose background is in enterprise software, has placed much more of an emphasis on BlackBerry's software business than its handset, or smartphone business. Chen told The Associated Press earlier this



John S. Chen, Chairman, CEO & President of Sybase, poses for a photo on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Chen was brought in as the interim chief executive of BlackBerry in November 2013.(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

month that he would be looking for a CEO with a strong software and services background, and noted that he wanted to monetize BlackBerry Messenger, the popular messaging application. BlackBerry also has a mobile device management business, which allows IT departments to manage different devices connected to their corporate networks. □

Mutts



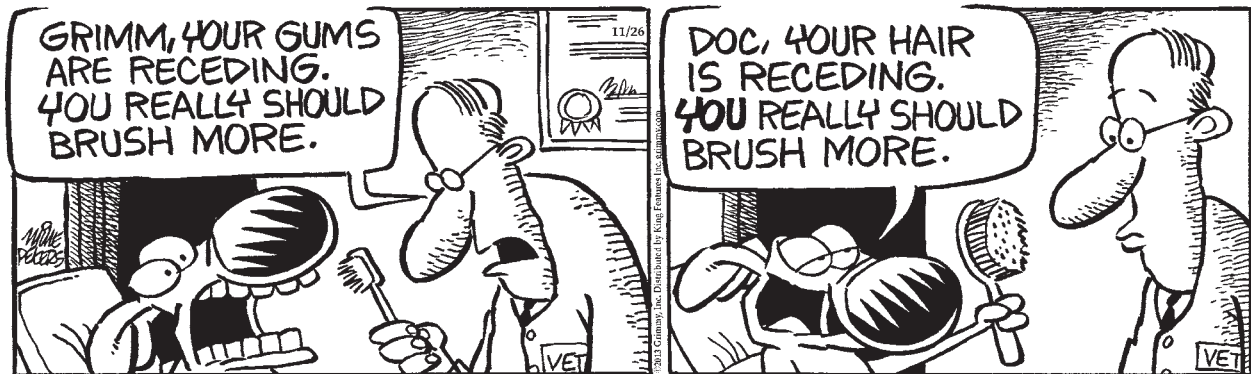
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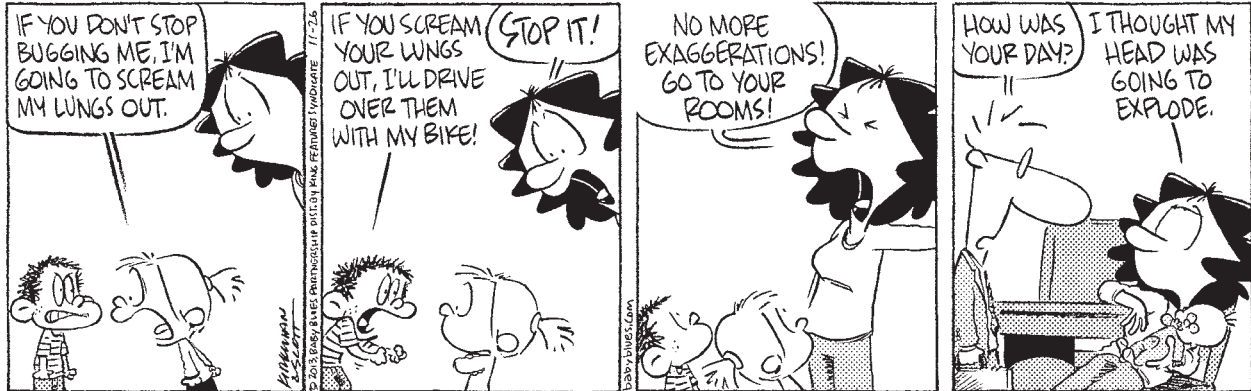
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Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		2			4	3		
	7						1	
9				8	1			2
1	4	2		6				
		3				4		
			1		9	8		3
8			7	6				4
	2						7	
		9	5			2		

Difficulty Level ★★

11/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

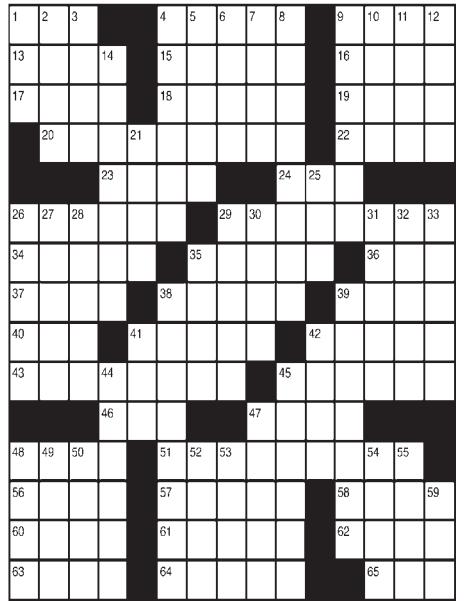
7	2	3	9	8	5	6	1	4
9	4	6	1	3	7	2	5	8
5	1	8	6	4	2	3	7	9
2	6	9	8	5	1	4	3	7
8	7	5	3	9	4	1	6	2
1	3	4	7	2	6	8	9	5
4	9	2	5	1	3	7	8	6
6	5	1	4	7	8	9	2	3
3	8	7	2	6	9	5	4	1

ACROSS

- 1 ___ the time; constantly
4 Marsh
9 Majority
13 Dial or Ivory
15 Fight verbally
16 In a lazy way
17 "Oh, for Pete's ___!"
18 Actress Sally
19 Person, place or thing
20 Down in the dumps
22 Encourage
23 One of the three tenses
24 Whopper
26 Take willingly
29 Devices often hooked to PCs
34 "A day late and a dollar ___"
35 Elephant nose
36 Encountered
37 Show-offs
38 Fork time
39 Unexceptional
40 Leprechaun
41 Army vehicles
42 Spud
43 Commandeers a plane in flight
45 Nine tens
46 Australian bird that cannot fly
47 Nourish
48 Not quite closed
51 Buildings full of books
56 Apple's center
57 Creek
58 Putin's "No"
60 Abound
61 Run ___ of the law; commit crime
62 Equipment
63 Kill
64 Rough & noisy
65 Parched

DOWN

- 1 Burro
2 Washerful of laundry



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

11/26/13

Monday's Puzzle Solved

RADAR	SLAM	PASS
OPINE	PILE	RUTH
MENDS	OOPS	ODOR
EXERTION	SATIRE	
EARL	DEVOTED	
POTATO	BASIC	
AWE	ENTER	DODGE
PEAR	SIFTS	LILY
ADMIT	MISER	SEE
SHEET	LATHES	
MANKIND	ALDA	
OBOIST	POSITION	
DOSE	OVER	ATONE
EVES	MINT	NOTES
LEST	BETA	TOAST

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11/26/13

- 35 Long journey
38 Odd
39 Making smooth
41 Bread spread
42 Bleachers level
44 Actor Irons
45 In a tidy way
47 Father of psychoanalysis
48 Performs
49 Singer Billy ___
50 Length times width
52 News, for short
53 Hard hit
54 Watched
55 Burn
59 Give it a go

IN BITCOIN'S ORBIT:

Virtual currency competition seeing dozens of alternatives

NATHANIEL POPPER

© 2013 New York Times

For many people, bitcoin seems like something from the day after tomorrow.

For Lawrence Blankenship, it's already a thing of the past.

A software engineer from Springfield, Mo., Blankenship is putting his money on PeerCoin, one of the biggest of the virtual currencies that are being promoted as alternatives to bitcoin.

With mounting interest from prominent investors and growing acceptance from regulators, bitcoin - either the new gold or the next Dutch tulip craze, depending on who is being asked - is at the center of the virtual money universe. Yet there are dozens of digital alternatives, like PeerCoin, Litecoin and anoncoin, whose backers point to advantages they say their currency has over bitcoin. PeerCoin, according to Blankenship, is closer than bitcoin to perfect, communal money. Blankenship, 34, has arranged to accept PeerCoin as the virtual currency of choice at a Star Trek convention he is organizing in his hometown.

"Looking down the road 10 years from now, I definitely see bitcoin being ousted," he said. "Everyone's going to start switching to other coins, and hopefully PeerCoin comes out ahead in that."

In the alternative galaxy of virtual currencies, newly created money can become worth millions of real dollars in a few months. All the PeerCoin in existence, for example, was worth nearly \$40 million last week. Programmers and mathematicians release new entrants into the field almost every week. On one popular exchange, Cryptsy, 60 different coins can now be traded.

Almost all of these altcoins, as they are known, have fed on the stratospheric rise of bitcoin. Since the beginning of the month, the value of bitcoin rose to more than \$900 at one point, from \$200, and it is

up 6,000 percent since the beginning of the year.

Many of the altcoins have risen at the same clip, driven by bets that the Internet has room for more than one form of virtual money, or that bitcoin can be

ey with some advantages that have never been possessed by any past forms of money," said George Selgin, an economics professor at the University of Georgia at Athens.

If this is a contest, bitcoin

fluctuating value. Most people are willing to use real currencies because they have stable values that make them good units of exchange. Virtual currencies, these days, are more like speculative commodities.

But this is not stopping the ascent of things like Litecoin, which is generally viewed as the second-most-popular digital money, with a total value of about \$250 million last week. Unlike bitcoin, which was invented by a shadowy creator known only as Satoshi Nakamoto, Litecoin was created by Charles Lee, a 36-year-old former programmer at Google who lives with his wife and two children in Silicon Valley. □



Charles Lee, the creator of Litecoin, a virtual currency promoted as an alternative to bitcoin, at his home in Mountain View, Calif., Nov. 22, 2013. With mounting interest from prominent investors, bitcoin is at the center of the virtual money universe, yet there are dozens of alternatives.

(Alexis Cuarezma/The New York Times)

overtaken. The constant innovation opens the door to new opportunities for fraud and illegal activities. Thanks to a lack of regulation, pump-and-dump schemes have become common. But the thousands of hours being poured into these projects underscore the degree to which a small but growing community believes that it has found the future of money.

"It's a very intriguing thing, because in principle, you can have a kind of mon-

is still light-years ahead of any of its competitors - the value of all bitcoin is measured in the billions of dollars, while only a few others have even cracked \$100 million. And bitcoin has the basic attributes that most other coins are trying to imitate: an open-source computer code with no central authority and a mathematically determined rate of expansion, not relying on a central bank.

What's more, most altcoins share the biggest weakness of bitcoin: a violently

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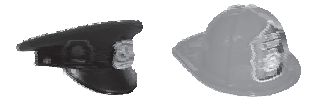
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200284

U.S. tells 23andMe to halt sales of genetic test

MATTHEW PERRONE
AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is ordering genetic test maker 23andMe to halt sales of its personalized DNA test kits, saying the company has failed to show that the technology is backed by science.

In a warning letter posted online, FDA regulators say the Google-backed company is violating federal law because its products claim to identify health risks for more than 250 diseases and health conditions. Only medical tests that have been cleared by the FDA are permitted to make such claims.

The letter follows years of back-and-forth between the government and 23andMe, the most visible company among a new field of startups selling personal genetic information. The proliferation of consumer-marketed genetic tests has troubled many public health officials and doctors who worry that the products are built on flimsy science.

For years, 23andMe resisted government regulation, arguing that it simply



This image provided 23andMe shows the company's logo. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is ordering genetic test maker 23andMe Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, to halt sales of its personalized DNA test kits, saying the company has failed to show that the technology is backed by science.

Associated Press

provides consumers with information, not a medical service. But last year the company appeared to change course, submitting several of the disease-specific tests included in its test kit.

A spokeswoman for the California-based company said 23andMe recognizes "that we have not met the FDA's expectations," for addressing questions about the submission.

"Our relationship with the FDA is extremely important

to us and we are committed to fully engaging with them to address their concerns," said Kendra Cassillo in a statement.

The FDA letter suggests that regulators have gone to great lengths to try and work with the company. Regulators even mention "more than 14 face-to-face and teleconference meetings, hundreds of email exchanges, and dozens of written communications."

"However, even after

these many interactions with 23andMe, we still do not have any assurance that the firm has analytically or clinically validated," its technology, the letter states.

The FDA warning takes issue with a number of claims the company makes for its saliva-based test kit, particularly calling it a "first step in prevention" against diseases like diabetes, heart disease and breast cancer. Regulators worry that false results from the test could cause patients to receive inadequate or inappropriate medical care.

For instance, 23andMe says its test can identify women who carry the BRCA gene mutation that significantly increases the risk of breast and ovarian cancer. But a false result could lead women to undergo unnecessary screening, chemotherapy and surgery.

The test also claims to predict how patients will respond to popular drugs, including the ubiquitous blood thinner warfarin, which is used to prevent blood clots. The FDA warns that an inaccurate reading there could "have significant unreasonable risk

of illness, injury, or death to the patient," if they don't receive the appropriate drug dose.

23andMe was co-founded by Anne Wojcicki, who married Google co-founder Sergey Brin in 2007. Google confirmed in September that the two are separated, though Google and Brin have invested millions in the privately held company over the years.

23andMe executives have previously said that they first contacted the FDA in 2007, before launching their product. The agency did not take an interest in the technology until 2010, when it issued letters to several testing companies, stating that their products are considered medical devices and must be approved as safe and effective. The FDA already regulates a variety of genetic tests administered by health care providers, such as those given to pregnant women to detect cystic fibrosis in a developing fetus. The FDA's concern with 23andMe appears to center on its commercial approach, which side-steps doctors and health professionals. □



In this photo taken using a long exposure, star trails are seen over Mount Sinabung as it spews volcanic ash into the air as seen from Tiga Pancur, North Sumatra, Indonesia, early Monday, Nov. 25, 2013.

Associated Press

More gases erupt from rumbling Indonesian volcano

BINSAR BAKKARA
Associated Press

KARO, Indonesia (AP) — Powerful bursts of hot ash and gravel erupted from a rumbling volcano in western Indonesia early Monday, sending panicked villagers streaming down the sides of the mountain.

Six new eruptions in the morning sent lava and searing gas tumbling up to 1.5 kilometers (.9 miles) down the slopes of Mount Sinabung in North Sumatra province. Volcanic material spewed as high as 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) into the air a day after authorities had raised the volcano's alert status to the highest level.

About 15,000 people have been evacuated from 17 villages in the danger zone 5 kilometers (3 miles)

around the crater, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said. The evacuation zone was expanded from 3 kilometers.

Thick, gray ash covered villages, farms and trees as far as 70 kilometers (43 miles) north of Mount Sinabung's crater, hitting the towns of Binjai and Langkat.

"Everything turned hot surrounding us," said Jatah Surbakti, a 45-year-old farmer who fled with his wife and four children to a shelter on trucks provided by the local disaster agency, along with hundreds of other villagers.

"We were running in panic under the rain of ash and gravel. ... I heard many women and children screaming and crying," he said, adding that his fruit

and vegetable farms were destroyed by the ash and his children's schools were disrupted.

The 2,600-meter (8,530-foot) Mount Sinabung has sporadically erupted since September. An eruption in 2010 killed two people and caught scientists off guard because the volcano had been quiet for four centuries.

Transportation Ministry spokesman Bambang Ervan said airlines had been notified to avoid routes near the mountain.

Mount Sinabung is among around 129 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin. □

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International Emmys to honor J.J. Abrams

CHARLES J. GANS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — J.J. Abrams may be immersed in a galaxy far, far away these days, but he's taking a break from preproduction work on the new "Star Wars" film to accept a special honor at the 41st International Emmy Awards Gala. Zachary Quinto, who recently reprised his role of Spock in Abrams' successful reboot of the "Star Trek" franchise, will present the honorary International Emmy Founders Award to the director-producer at Monday night's awards ceremony at the Hilton New York.

"J.J. Abrams is probably the most interesting creative talent in the industry right now. He's a great writer, producer, director and an amazing creator," said Bruce L. Paisner, president and CEO of the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. "He already at age 47 has

a number of classic television shows like 'Felicity' and 'Lost' that have set a model for all kinds of shows that came afterward."

Abrams is executive producer of three currently running TV shows — the science-fiction series "Revolution" and "Almost Human" and "Person of Interest," the crime drama revolving around an omnipresent government-sponsored surveillance network that premiered well before the recent revelations about the National Security Agency. "J.J. is very good at anticipating what's going to be in the headlines, and he also creates new ways of looking at people and situations like he did in reinventing the 'Star Trek' franchise," Paisner said.

The presentation to Abrams will highlight the awards ceremony, hosted by British comedian John Oliver of "The Daily Show," in which 36 nominees from 19 countries will be competing for

International Emmys in nine categories. The awards honor excellence in TV programming outside the U.S. Britain and Brazil shared the lead for nominations with six apiece, followed by France with three. South Korea, Mexico, Germany and South Africa each had two nominations. Angola and Uruguay received their first nominations.

BBC One's "Accused," a crime anthology series created by writer-producer Jimmy McGovern, is looking to repeat its 2011 win for best drama series. Sean Bean, recently seen in "Game of Thrones," is up for best actor for an episode of "Accused," in which he shed his tough-guy image to portray a schoolteacher by day who becomes a transvestite by night and gets involved in an affair with a married man that leads to a brutal crime of passion.

Sheridan Smith, known for her comedic roles on



In a Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2013 file photo, director J.J. Abrams smiles during the Japanese premiere of his film "Star Trek Into Darkness" in Tokyo.

Associated Press

stage and TV, received a best actress nomination for playing the title character in the ITV drama series "Mrs. Biggs," based on the true story of the wife of Ronnie Biggs, who was involved in the 1963 Great Train Robbery, in which 2.6 million pounds was stolen from a mail train.

Brazil's Marcos Palmeira received a best actor nomination for his role in the HBO Latin America original series "Mandrake Especial" in which he portrays a Rio de Janeiro criminal lawyer who helps his wealthy clients deal with the local underworld, while Fernanda Montenegro, a best actress Oscar nominee for the 1998 film "Central Station," got a nod for her role in TV Globo's "Sweet Mother." The other actor nominees include Japan's Shinichi Tsutsumi for "A Single Father's Love Story" and Germany's Heino Ferch for "Anatomy of Revenge."

China's Li Sun for "The Back Palace: Legend of Zhen Huan" and Sweden's Lotta Tejle for "30 Degrees in February" rounded out the actress nominees.

World heavyweight boxing champion Wladimir Klitschko will present the honorary International Emmy Directorate Award to Germany's Anke Schaferkordt, co-CEO of the RTL Group, the leading European entertainment network.

Ahead of the awards ceremony, the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences announced a new International Emmy category for 2014 for non-English language U.S. primetime programs. It's expected that this category will include programs on the Spanish-language Univision and Telemundo networks, which, though eligible, get overlooked for U.S. primetime Emmy nominations. □

Stars donate songs for Philippines relief album

NEW YORK (AP) — Dozens of top stars have donated songs to an album aimed at raising funds for typhoon disaster relief in the Philippines.

Songs by The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Beyonce, U2 and Bruno Mars are among the 39 donated to "Songs for the Philippines,"

available for purchase Monday at iTunes and for streaming on iTunes Radio. The artists, record companies and music publishers have agreed to donate the proceeds to the Philippines Red Cross.

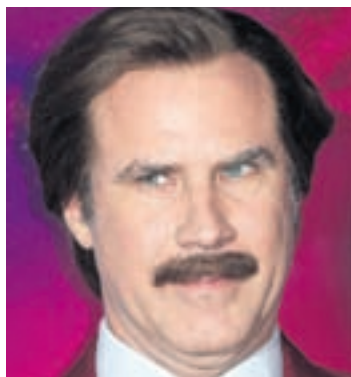
Thousands were killed, injured and displaced by Typhoon Haiyan earlier this month and officials have struggled to keep up with humanitarian aid demands.

The compilation album has a little of everything,

from the disturbing images of a live version of Eminem's "Stan" to the calming effect of The Beatles' "Let It Be." □

This Sept. 21, 2013 file photo shows Bruno Mars performing at IHeartRadio Music Festival in Las Vegas, Nev. Mars' "Count on Me," is part of a collection of 39 hits for "Songs of the Philippines," available on iTunes to raise money for disaster relief efforts in the Philippines.

Associated Press



Actor Will Ferrell, dressed as the character Ron Burgundy, poses for photographers upon arrival at the 2013 MTV Europe Music Awards, in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Sunday, Nov. 10, 2013.

Associated Press

Ron Burgundy to 'call' Olympic curling trials

The Associated Press
Ron Burgundy, Will Ferrell's fictitious "Anchorman" character, will help cover Canada's Olympic curling trials for broadcaster TSN.

Burgundy will be paired with veteran curling broadcaster Vic Rauter when the

"Roar of the Rings" opens on Sunday.

The winners of the tournament in Winnipeg, Manitoba, will represent Canada at the Sochi Olympics in February. The women's final is Dec. 7 and the men's final is Dec. 8.

Burgundy says in a release

that he will "accept your hallowed task and sing out with a battle cry worthy of your love and your wisdom. And that song is, 'Winnipeg, get ready to paint the town Burgundy!'"

"Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues" opens Dec. 20. □

Controversy over Bashir punishment doesn't go away



This Jan. 22, 2013 file photo shows Martin Bashir at the EA SimCity Learn. Build. Create. Inauguration After-Party, in Washington. Associated Press

DAVID BAUDER
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Martin Bashir's apology for graphic comments about Sarah Palin on MSNBC hasn't ended questions about whether the remarks deserve punishment from his bosses, giving unwanted attention to a cable network dealing with sinking ratings along with loose-lipped hosts. Palin, in a Fox interview on Sunday, said MSNBC was guilty of "executive hypocrisy" by not publicly disciplining Bashir for his "vile, evil comments." Four days after Bashir apologized, MSNBC said it was "handling this matter internally" and wouldn't comment further. "It's a systemic problem," said Jeff Cohen, an Ithaca College journalism professor and liberal commentator who was a producer for Phil Donahue's prime-time MSNBC show a decade ago. "It's a problem at MSNBC. It's a problem in cable news. It's a certain coarseness where ev-

everything goes. I guess they can keep sanctioning and suspending people, but there's something wrong when name-calling is considered OK." Bashir's comments about Palin came on the same day MSNBC suspended actor Alec Baldwin from his weekly show for two episodes for his part in an off-the-air episode. Baldwin used an anti-gay slur in a confrontation with a photographer on a New York City street. Bashir used his weekday afternoon program on Nov. 15 to criticize Palin for her remarks comparing U.S. indebtedness to China to slavery. Bashir cited the diaries of a former plantation overseer who punished slaves by having someone defecate in their mouth or urinate on their face. He suggested the former Alaska governor deserved the same treatment. The somber anchor, a former "Nightline" host, apologized on his next show on Nov. 18. The Baldwin suspension set up an immediate contrast

for MSNBC's critics to latch on to: Why does an epithet used in a heated moment in an off-air confrontation merit a suspension, while a sickening comment made on the air, presumably researched and written in advance, not deserve one?

Other MSNBC personalities have been disciplined for remarks that drew unwanted attention. The network fired Don Imus in 2007 for referring to members of the Rutgers women's basketball team as "nappy-headed hos." David Shuster was suspended for two weeks in 2008 for suggesting Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign had "pimped out" daughter Chelsea Clinton by having her place phone calls to celebrities and convention delegates. The network suspended and eventually dumped longtime commentator Pat Buchanan in 2012 for a book that some critics called racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic, charges that he denied.

MSNBC is dominated by left-leaning news programs, a liberal alternative to Fox News Channel, which ap-

peals to Republicans. MSNBC has had a rough year, with its weeknight programming down 32 percent in viewership from 2012, probably due in part to less interest in politics following an election year and President Barack Obama's dwindling popularity (Fox and CNN are down 17 percent in the same Nielsen company measurement).

Palin, a Republican and Fox News analyst said in an interview with "Fox News Sunday" that MSNBC had condoned Bashir's comments. "That's hypocrisy," she said. When a conservative woman is a target on MSNBC "they usually just kind of pooh-poo it, laugh it off. It's no big deal." MSNBC did, however, take Ed Schultz off the air for a week in 2011 after he referred to conservative talk-show host Laura Ingraham as a "slut" during a commentary on his radio show. Schultz apologized publicly to Ingraham before serving his suspension. The network did not explain what made the Bashir incident different. □

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Katie Couric to anchor Yahoo's video news coverage

MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Katie Couric is joining Yahoo to anchor an expansion of the Internet company's video news coverage in a move that she hopes will help persuade other broadcast TV veterans make the transition into on-line programming. Monday's announcement confirms recent published reports that Couric is hoping to attract more viewers on the Internet after spending the past 22 years working as a talk-show host and news anchor at NBC, CBS and ABC. "I am particularly excited about hopefully attracting other people to this platform and venture," Couric said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We are in a major, transformative time in terms of media in this country." Financial terms of Couric's contract with Yahoo weren't disclosed. She also declined to say how many more reporters will be added to her team at Yahoo. Couric, 56, will continue to host her daytime talk show, "Katie," on ABC even af-



In this Monday, Nov. 11, 2013 file photo, Katie Couric attends the 23rd Annual Glamour Women of the Year Awards hosted by Glamour Magazine at Carnegie Hall in New York. Associated Press

ter she becomes Yahoo's "global anchor" beginning early next year. She described her new role at Yahoo as a "work in progress." "I will be involved in developing a lot of concepts,

but not necessarily doing everything," Couric said. "I will be doing interviews, but not on a daily basis. Probably monthly at this point." The Yahoo job appealed to Couric because it will give her an outlet to delve into breaking developments around the world that she regularly covered as the anchor of CBS' evening news from 2006 through 2011. Couric's hiring is the latest coup for Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer as she brings in well-known journalists in an effort to create compelling content that will attract more people to the company's online services. In the past month, Yahoo has also lured away technology columnist David Pogue and political reporter Matt Bai from The New York Times.

Since leaving Google Inc. to become Yahoo's CEO 16 months ago, Mayer has been trying to make Ya-

hoo's services more alluring so people will visit them on a regular basis and dwell for longer periods. In doing so, she is hoping Yahoo will be able to sell more digital ads and boost the Sunnyvale, California, company's revenue, which has been lagging the overall growth of Internet marketing for years. "News is a definitive daily habit for our users, and Katie will work with our talented editorial team to pioneer a new chapter of digital journalism," Mayer said. Yahoo already operates the most popular online news section in the U.S. with 81.5 million visitors in October, according to the most recent data from the research firm comScore Inc. The audience's size is roughly the same as when Mayer became Yahoo's CEO. CNN ranks second in online news in the U.S., with 70 million visitors. □

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Obama's Bay Of Pigs



JOE NOCERA
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This week, when we are remembering John F. Kennedy, I'd like to touch briefly on the greatest fiasco of his presidency: the Bay of Pigs invasion. No sooner had Kennedy taken the oath of office than he discovered that the Pentagon and CIA were preparing to send 1,500 Cuban exiles to invade Cuba. Although they would be greatly outnumbered by Cuban troops, the U.S. military and the CIA assumed that once the attack began, the Cuban people would rise up and overthrow Fidel Castro. Kennedy was privately skeptical, but he didn't yet have the confidence in his own judgment to override the experts he was surrounded by. So he gave the go-ahead - only to discover that the experts didn't know what they were talking about. The exiles were quickly routed, America was humiliated and Kennedy was left to take the blame. So far, at least, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act has been President Barack Obama's Bay of Pigs. Led to believe that the preparation for Obamacare was on track, Obama was blindsided when that turned out not to be the case. The website where people are supposed to enroll, HealthCare.gov, is a train wreck. People with individual policies saw that they were set to be canceled - and then couldn't enroll in Obamacare because the website had collapsed. In other cases, people discovered that even the least expensive plan available to them under Obamacare cost more than their old plan. And on and on.

There are two primary reasons Obamacare has gotten off to such a terrible start. The first is that it is one of the most complicated things that the federal government has ever tried to do; it was inevitable that there would be problems.

An insurance executive friend says that the systems Obamacare required were an order of magnitude more complex than even the most complicated insurance company systems. That complexity, says Drew Altman, the president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, was necessitated by the many compromises that were required to pass the bill into law. Ted Marmor, a former Yale professor and an expert on entitlement programs, says that it has to coexist within the extraordinarily complicated "patchwork" that is the U.S.

health care system.

Marmor was a young special assistant in the old Department of Health, Education and Welfare when Medicare rolled out in 1966 - a rollout that was as smooth as Obamacare's has been rocky. ("Our biggest worry was getting Southern hospitals to treat black people," Marmor told me.) Partly that was because Medicare was a relatively straightforward program. But Marmor also believes that it was because the men in charge of the new Medicare program were seasoned pros who knew how to get the job done.

Thus the second reason the Obamacare rollout has been so awful. "They put amateurs in charge," Marmor says. Obama would have been much better served if, for instance, he had called upon his friend Jeffrey Immelt, the chief executive of General Electric, to find a team of specialists to lead the effort.

To even think that thought, however, requires management skills that this president has never shown. Nor has his initial reaction done much to instill faith. Calling on insurance companies to allow people to keep their old insurance plans - even after they've been canceled - is untenable. Even if state boards of insurance would allow such a move, it still wreaks havoc with the calculations upon which premiums are set.

Obama also announced a deadline of Nov. 30 for fixing the problems with HealthCare.gov. But what will that really accomplish? It is an arbitrary deadline that will almost surely not be met - and will sow even more mistrust.

With each day's stories about the troubled rollout of Obamacare, it is easy to believe that it is doomed. But it's not - not by a long shot.

"We'll know a lot more when we see what the roughly 15 million to 16 million people who are expected to get coverage that first year think," Altman says. "And they won't know themselves what they think about Obamacare until they start getting services."

Jonathan Gruber, the MIT economist who helped devise the Massachusetts health plan upon which Obamacare is modeled, says the deadline that matters is March 31. That's when the individual mandate comes into play - meaning that people will either have signed up for health insurance or pay a fine.

"It's way too early to panic," he says.

Eighteen months after the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy was confronted with the Cuban missile crisis. Once again, the generals in the Pentagon wanted him to respond militarily, a route that was likely to lead to war with the Soviet Union. But this time, he trusted his own judgment, took a different path and defused the crisis. He had applied the lessons he had learned from the Bay of Pigs to the Cuban missile crisis. As Obama tries to turn Obamacare around, that is the looming question: Can he learn? □



Danger In A Mickey Mouse Couch



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
© 2013 New York Times

Researchers this summer purchased 42 children's chairs, sofas and other furniture from major retailers and tested them for toxic flame retardants that have been linked to cancer, birth defects, diminished IQs and other problems.

In a study released a few days ago, the Center for Environmental Health reported the results: The toxins were found in all but four of the products tested. "Most parents would never suspect that their children could be exposed to toxic flame-retardant chemicals when they sit on a Mickey Mouse couch, but our report shows that children's foam furniture can carry hidden health hazards," a co-author of the study, Carolyn Cox, said in releasing the report.

These flame retardants represent a dizzying corporate scandal. It's a story of corporate greed, deceit and skulduggery, powerfully told in a new HBO documentary, "Toxic Hot Seat," that is scheduled to air Monday evening.

This is a televised window into political intrigue and duplicity that makes "House of Cards" or "Breaking Bad" seem like a Sunday school picnic.

The story goes back to the 1970s, when the tobacco industry was under pressure to make self-extinguishing cigarettes be-

cause so many people were dying in fires caused by careless smokers. The tobacco industry didn't want to tinker with cigarettes, so it lobbied instead for requiring flame retardants in mattresses and couches.

This became a multibillion-dollar boondoggle for the chemical industry, but studies showed that flame retardants as actually used in sofas don't prevent fires. This is easy to test: Just set a cushion on fire. The documentary shows that it will burn right up. The chemical industry has cited the work of a fire safety scientist, Vytenis Babrauskas, as showing that flame retardants do limit fires. But Babrauskas says in the HBO documentary that chemical companies misrepresented his findings "in an exceedingly blatant and disgraceful way."

Babrauskas says that, in fact, retardants provide little if any delay for a fire, and then lead to much more toxic fumes. "You get the worst of both possible worlds," he says.

One risk is to firefighters, who are coming down with rare cancers. The larger danger is to people sitting on those couches. Retardants are released as dust from the foam and accumulate on the floor. The greatest risk is probably to pregnant women and to small children, who are also more likely to be on the floor.

These chemicals are frequently endocrine disruptors that mimic hormones, and mounting evidence links them to cancer, reproductive problems and other ailments. One positive step: California announced new standards Thursday that will lead to the sale of flame-retardant-free furniture there.

It's often impossible to know whether a particular couch contains retardants. The Center for Environmental Health suggests that parents avoid foam and choose furniture made of wood, or upholstered with cotton, down, wool or polyester fiberfill.

Arlene Blum, a California scientist whose research led to

certain flame retardants being banned from children's pajamas in the 1970s, recounts her horror when she found that those same chemicals were still being used in couches that children sleep on.

As the evidence grew about the danger of flame retardants, legislation was proposed in California, Maine and elsewhere to curb these chemicals. That's when a mysterious organization called Citizens for Fire Safety Institute began running commercials defending the chemicals.

"The California Legislature is considering a bill that will endanger our children," the group warned in one commercial. Another cautioned that without flame retardants, household furniture would spread fire through a home.

"Say no to laws that put our children in danger," the group warned.

So who are these Citizens for Fire Safety? Their website once showed an image of children in front of a fire station and described the group as "a coalition of fire professionals, educators, community activists, burn centers, doctors, fire departments and industry leaders."

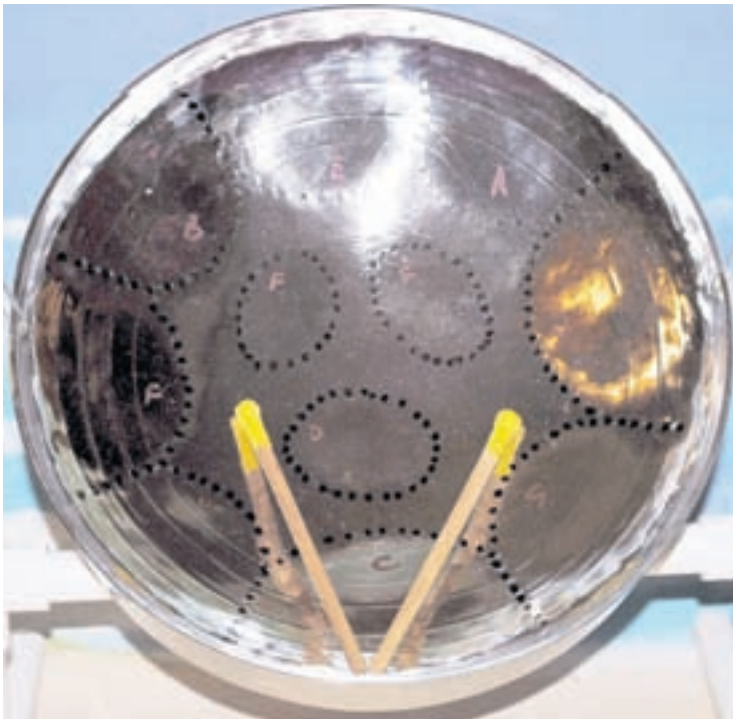
"Toxic Hot Seat" follows a group of Chicago Tribune reporters as they dig into Citizens for Fire Safety. Their excavation of public records revealed that this "coalition" has just three members - a trio of giant companies manufacturing flame retardants. The organization was a lie, meant to deceive politicians and voters.

(These days the website has been mostly dismantled and simply refers visitors to the chemical lobby, the American Chemistry Council, which has set up a website responding to the HBO documentary: flameretardantfacts.com.)

Let's be clear. The companies stonewalling safety regulation include giants like Exxon, BASF, DuPont and Dow Chemical, and I hope their executives squirm Monday evening as they watch "Toxic Hot Seat." □

Every Tuesday Night from 8pm to 10pm:

Steel Pan Night at Palm Beach Plaza Mall



PALM BEACH - Nico Connor, a second generation steel pan recording artist who is one of the 2 performing sons of the late Edgar Connor, Aruba steel



pan pioneer who obviously shared his talent with his sons. Nico has been surrounded by (steel pan) music and was in love with the sound

from a young age, his mother Gloria Connor the great arranger of the famous invaders steel band gave him a saxophone that's still at his side but his steel pans have always had his priority in any form or music.

Together with his also talented brother Lee brought a new trade wind to steel pan music, arrangements and performing. As a steel pan performer/label owner he's always looking for the next step to add to his virtuosity groovy sounds, and expand his musical journey beyond the horizon. The all-star band will be

performing at Palm Beach Plaza Mall every Tuesday Night from 8pm to 10pm! We invite you to come and experience Aruba's heritage on Steel Pan Music, tonight at Palm Beach Plaza Mall. □



SteelPan Night

every tuesday 8pm-10pm

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TOTTO

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